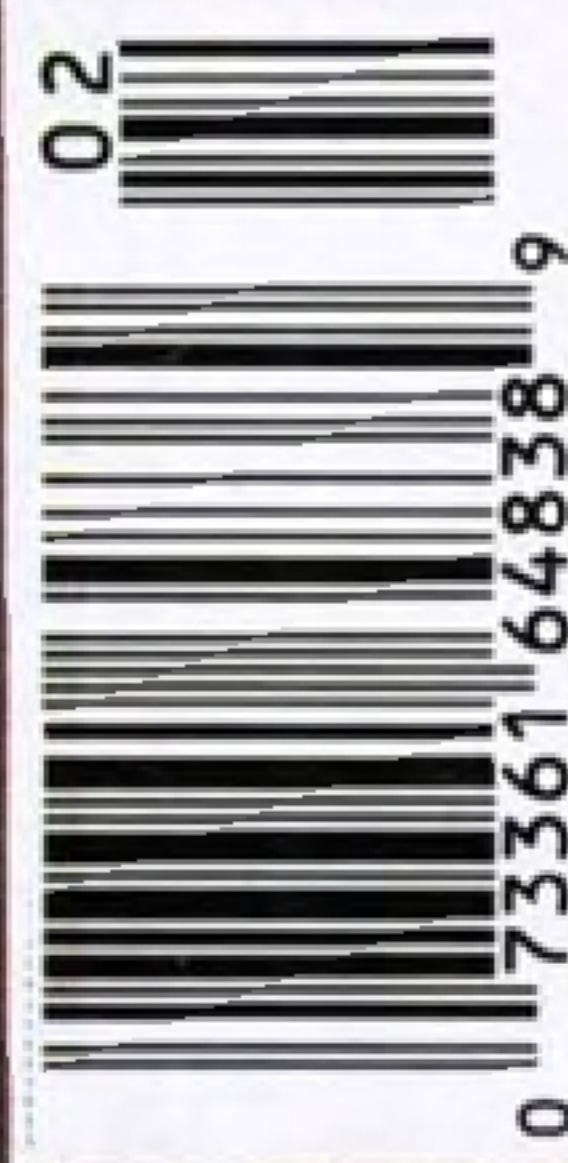


Sight and Sound

20
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FILM
REVIEWS



From 'The Driller Killer' to 'Bad Lieutenant':
Abel Ferrara's bloodlines
Hitler's steel butterfly:
Leni Riefenstahl
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Quentin Tarantino
celebrates the
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Spike Lee on Malcolm X



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On the selection of their films for the

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21 Stephen Street
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Telephone 071 255 1444
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Editorial
Editor
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Deputy editor
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Associate editor
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Advertising sales
Mark Pearson
Hucksters Ltd
Riseden, Tidebrook
Wadhurst, East Sussex
Telephone 0892 784804
Facsimile 0892 784796

Business
Publishing director
Caroline Moore
Managing director
BFI publishing
Colin MacCabe
Advertising manager
Mark Pearson
Telephone 0892 784804
Newsstand distribution
UMD, 1 Benwell Road
London N7 7AX
Telephone 071 700 4600
Bookshop distribution
Central Books
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Sight and Sound



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Evergreen

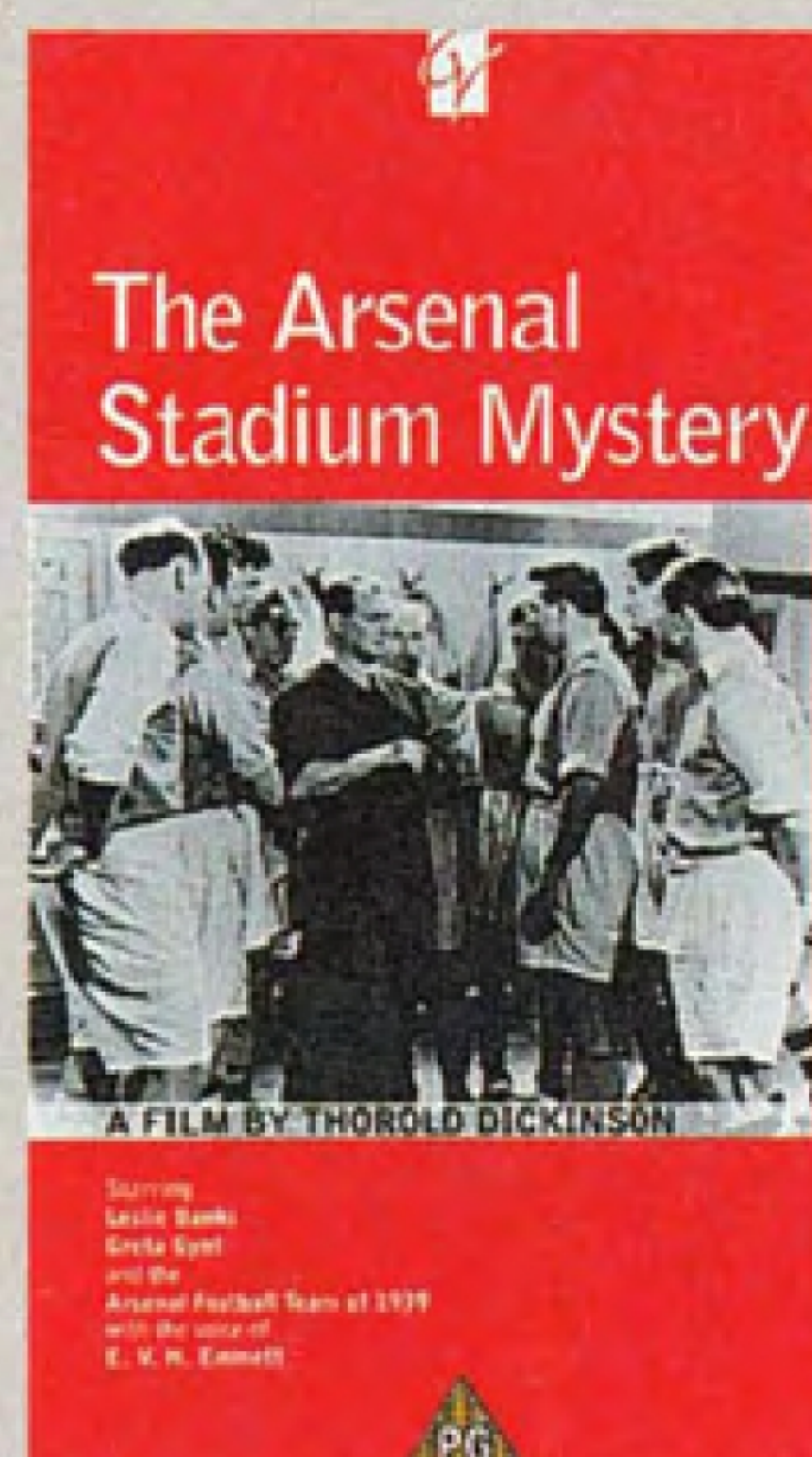
Directed by
Victor Saville

UK 1934 /Certificate U

B&W/90 mins (approx)

Price £12.99 plus p&p

Jessie Matthews was a huge hit in this Gaumont-British riposte to the 30s Hollywood musical which was acclaimed on both sides of the Atlantic. "A considerable joy." New York Times



The Arsenal Stadium Mystery

Directed by
Thorold Dickinson

UK 1939/Certificate PG

B&W/82 mins (approx)

Price £12.99 plus p&p

A footballer dies by poisoning during a game, and Scotland Yard investigates. This fast-moving British thriller provides wonderfully authentic footage of the great pre-war Arsenal team, both on and off the pitch.



First a Girl

Directed by
Victor Saville

UK 1935/Certificate U

B&W/88 mins (approx)

Price £12.99 plus p&p

Saville's follow-up to *Evergreen* again stars Jessie Matthews in this sparkling original of Blake Edwards' *Victor Victoria*. Arising from the ambiguity of cross-dressing is a film considered on a par with American films of the day.



Madonna of the Seven Moons

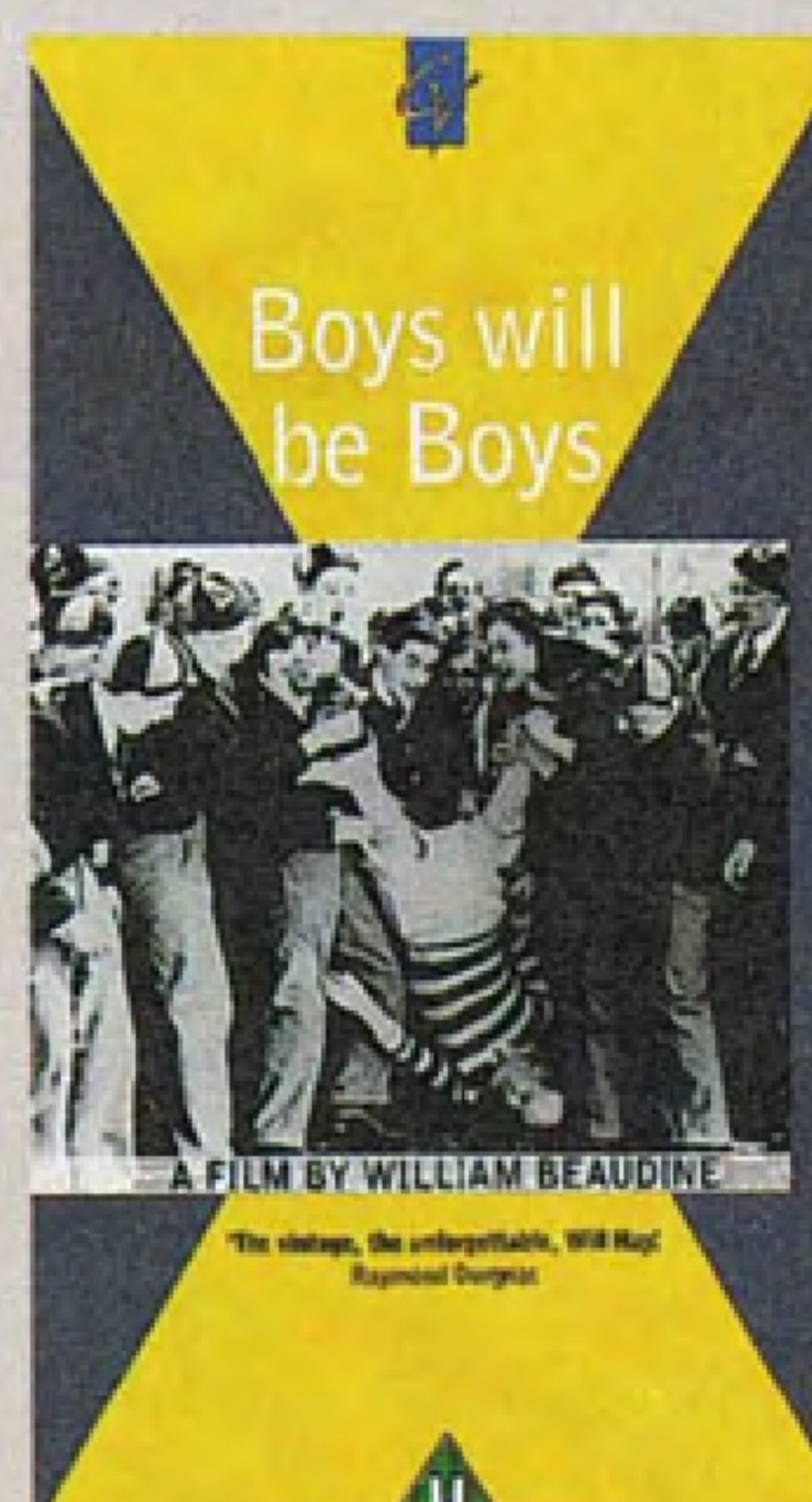
Directed by
Arthur Crabtree

UK 1944 /Certificate PG

B&W/106 mins (approx)

Price £12.99 plus p&p

This wartime Gainsborough melodrama stars Stewart Granger with Phyllis Calvert as a schizophrenic wife dividing her time between a glamorous gypsy criminal (Granger) and her wealthy Italian husband.



Boys will be Boys

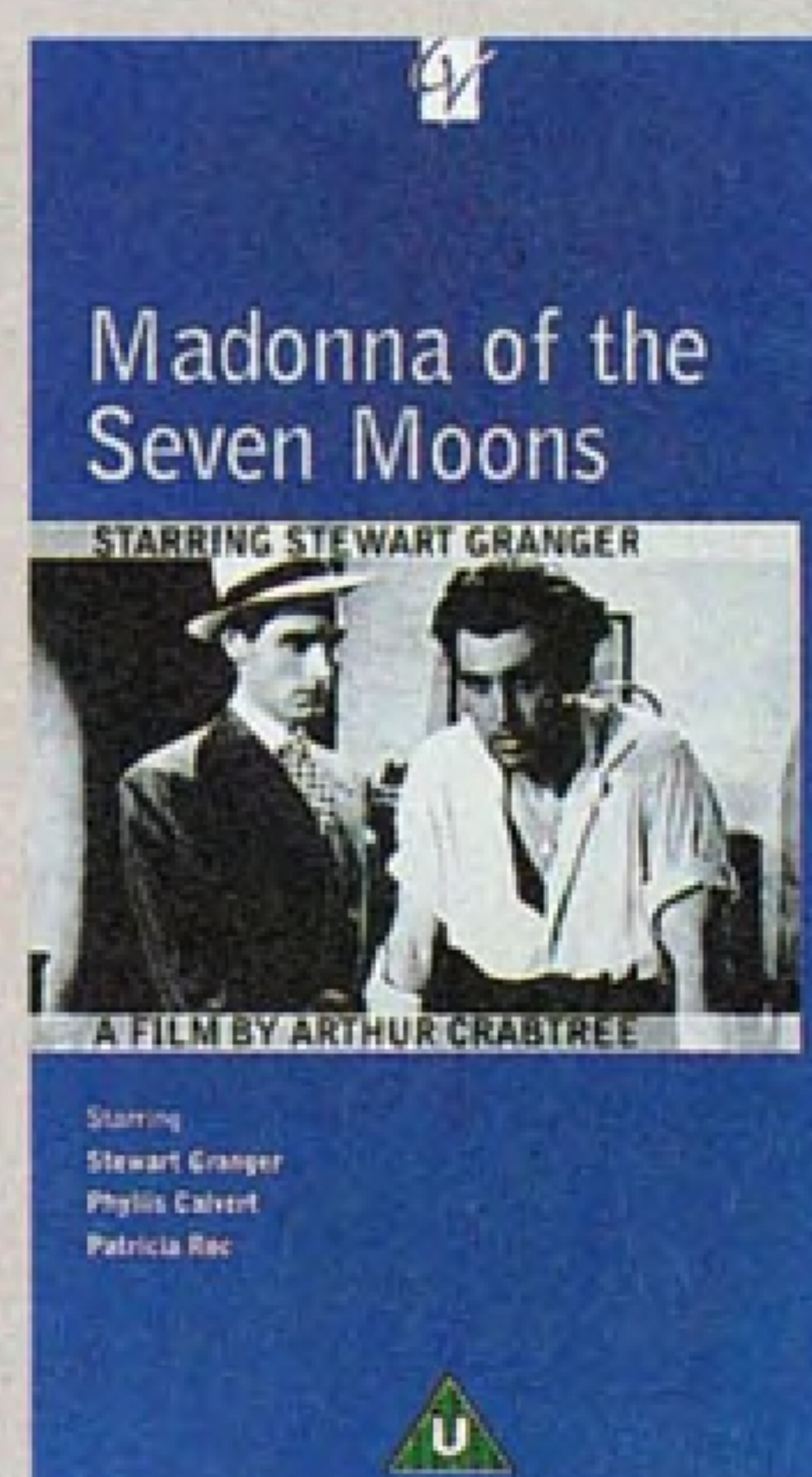
Directed by
William Beaudine

UK 1935/Certificate U

B&W/73 mins (approx)

Price £12.99 plus p&p

Will Hay is at his very best as Dr Alec Smart, the bumbling Head of Narkover school, the male precursor of St Trinians.



Blanche Fury

Directed by
Marc Allegret

UK 1947/Certificate PG

B&W/91 mins (approx)

Price £12.99 plus p&p

Stewart Granger stars in this now critically acclaimed classic melodrama, which includes a wronged illegitimate cousin, an illicit love affair and a double murder!

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Closed doors

Contributors to this issue

Bob Baker is co-editor of *Film Dope*

Stella Bruzzi is a lecturer in film and drama at the University of Manchester

Sean Day-Lewis is a freelance writer specialising in television

Manthia Diawara's new book on African cinema will be reviewed in a future issue

Professor Thomas Elsaesser has curated the current NFT season, entitled 'Inscriptions of War'

Nicholas Garnham is director of the Centre for Communications and Information Studies, University of Westminster

Julian Graffy is senior lecturer in Russian at SSEES

Sue Harper is the author of a forthcoming book on the British costume film

Lisa Kennedy is a New York-based critic who has written widely on African-American cinema and culture

Robert Murphy is the author of *Sixties British Cinema*

Brian Neve is the author of *Film and Politics in America*

David Robinson has published numerous books on cinema

Gavin Smith conducted the recent S&S interview with Michael Mann

Paul Julian Smith is Professor of Spanish, University of Cambridge

Lesley Stern teaches film at the University of New South Wales

Philip Strick is a writer and teacher

Andrea Stuart formerly features editor of *The Voice*, is a freelance writer and broadcaster

James Verniere is film critic for the *Boston Herald*

As Michael Grade said last summer in Edinburgh, it was troubling that John Birt was appointed as the Director General of the BBC without even the pretence of open competition. Whatever this magazine's reservations about other aspects of Michael Grade's assault on the BBC, his comments on the corporation's management practices and culture seem only more telling in the light of the two latest appointments – Bob Phillis as Deputy Director General and Liz Forgan as Managing Editor Network Radio – neither of whom faced any declared competition. (This is not to question the fitness of either of the employees, only the way they were appointed.) Landing a senior management post at the BBC seems increasingly analogous to being offered a Cabinet post: the candidate waits expectantly by the telephone for the chief executive's call.

This might not concern us if the BBC were a private company. But it is not. It is a public institution, which, unlike its competitors, claims to be committed to "openness and accountability" – yet bizarrely does not feel that this spirit need extend to the appointment of its most senior staff. This is particularly regrettable since there *are* intriguing and positive elements in the Director General's plans, announced at the same time as the appointments. While it is difficult as yet to know what bi-media policy might mean in practice, the extensive Programme Strategy review to be headed by Liz Forgan – if it consults

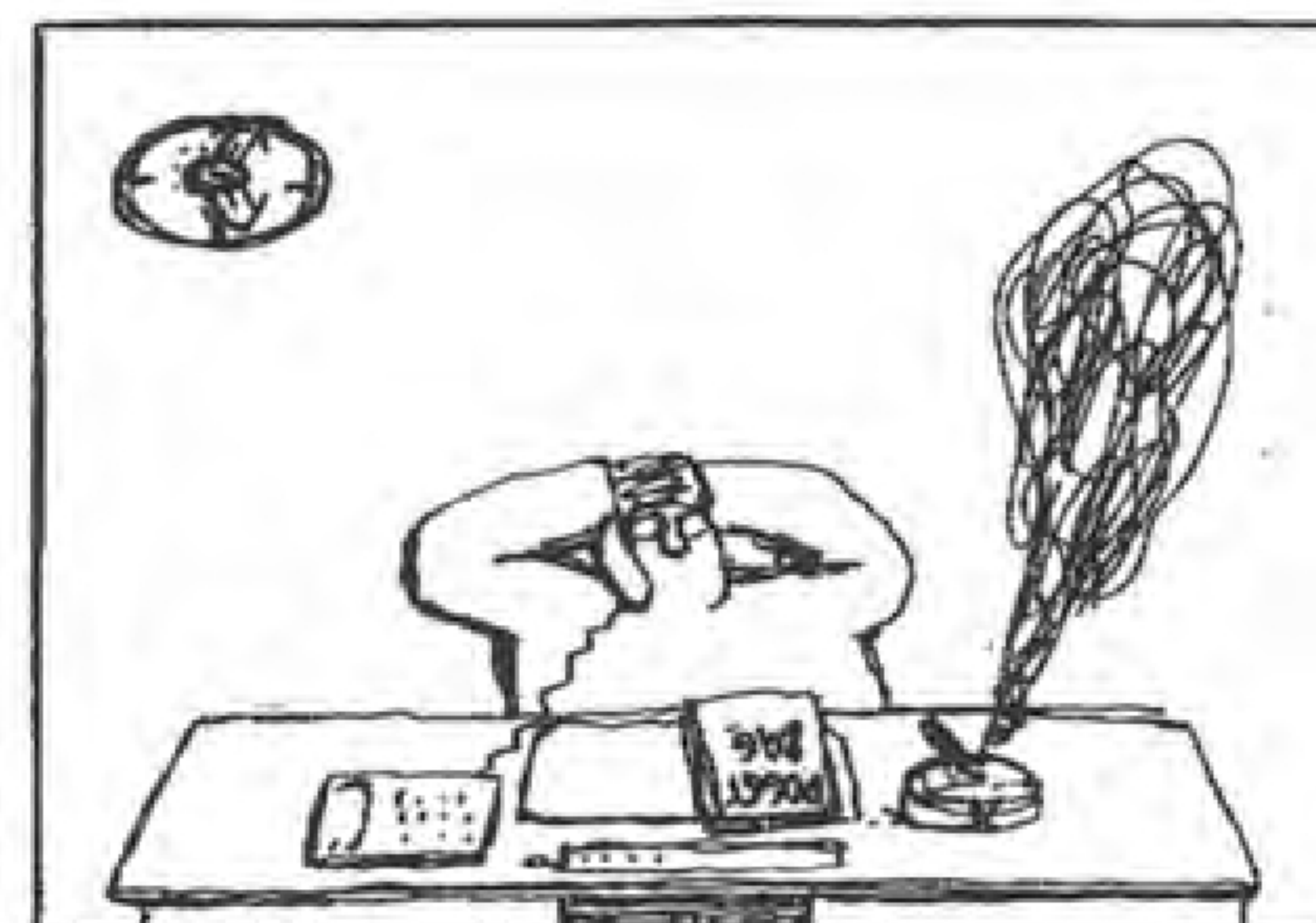
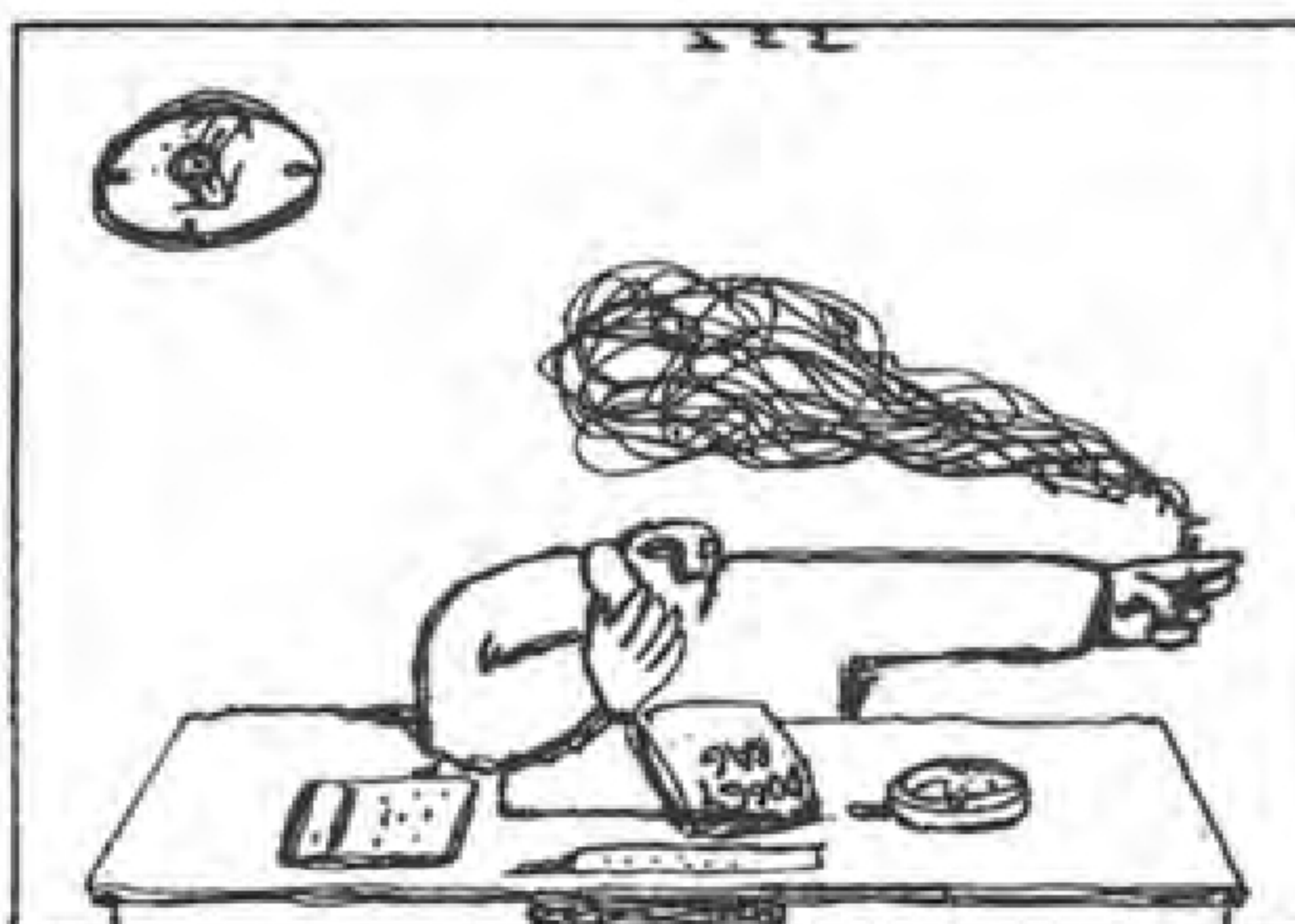
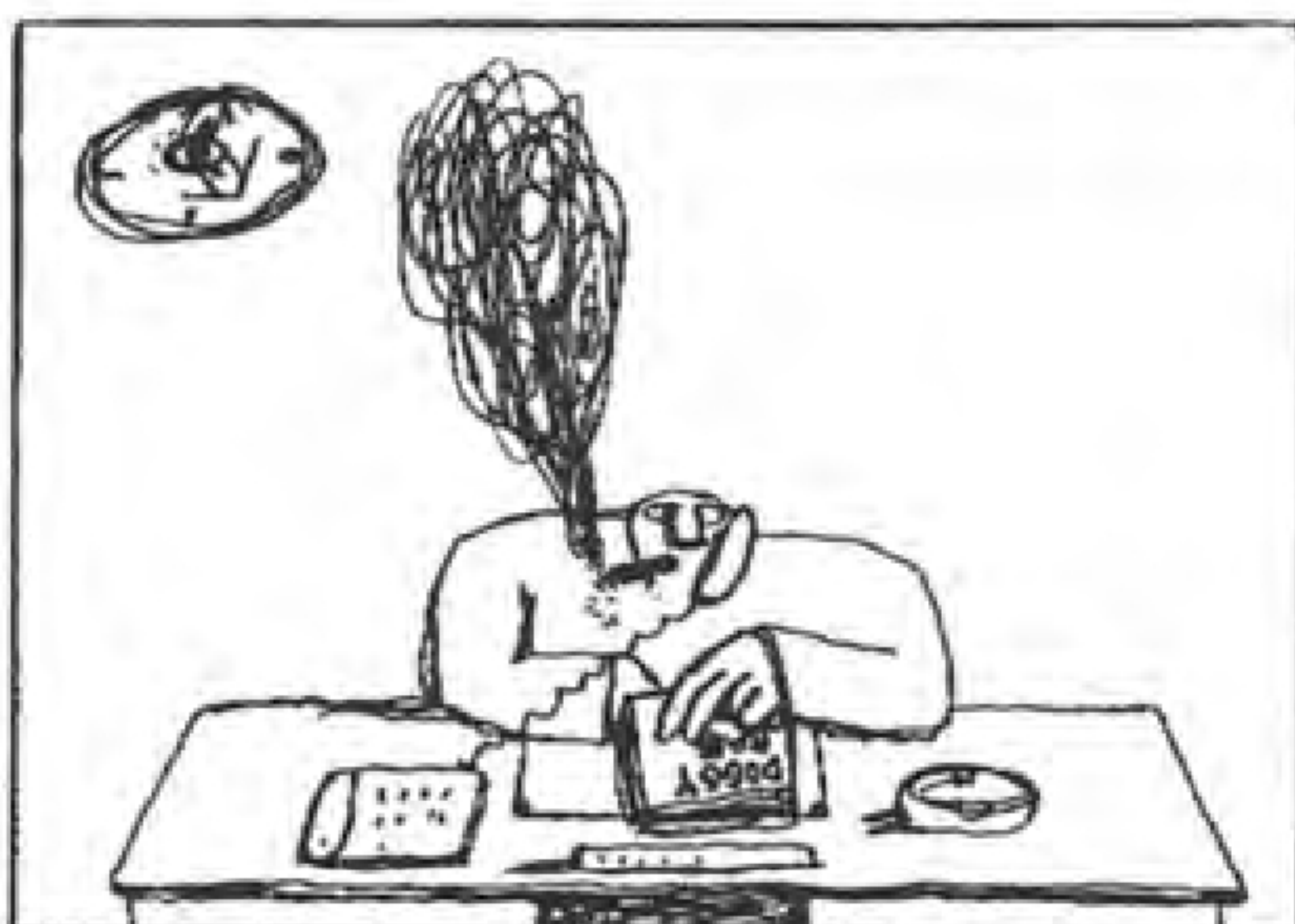
widely – sounds promising, as does the determination of the corporation "to define the role, purpose and specific objectives of each channel or service". On John Birt's part there seems a general willingness to ask for explicit *raison d'être* for the identity of channels, programming choices and so on. Birt is not the kind of executive who defers to the status quo by reference to precedence or 'common sense'.

His two new appointments certainly suggest he is ready to face the future – as he understands it. Bob Phillis, formerly financial saviour at ITN, has been appointed to cope with the accounting mess; Liz Forgan, formerly Director of Programmes at Channel 4, has been appointed, or so it seems, to help to sustain the public service broadcasting remit.

But there is a more difficult unresolved matter – how to *reinvent* public service television for the 90s, when no one believes, as they once did, that the BBC speaks to and for the nation? There needs to be a national debate about this matter – one which recognises that old solutions are no longer feasible. And it is in this context that the way Phillis and Forgan were appointed is disquieting. For it seems to suggest that the serious decisions are to be taken behind closed doors by elites, rather than at the end of open and hard arguments in which all of us might have an opportunity to take part. If public service television excludes the public, what point has it?

JERRY ON LINE #1

Peter Lydon – James Sillavan ©



'Jerry, it's a vicious, nasty little script. A foul-mouthed bulletfest, crammed with pointless violence. It has no heroes, no villains & the scene with the tortoise & the blowtorch made me gag. A good soundtrack & a first-time director we'll have our 1st critical success in years!'

Court etiquette

Stella Bruzzi

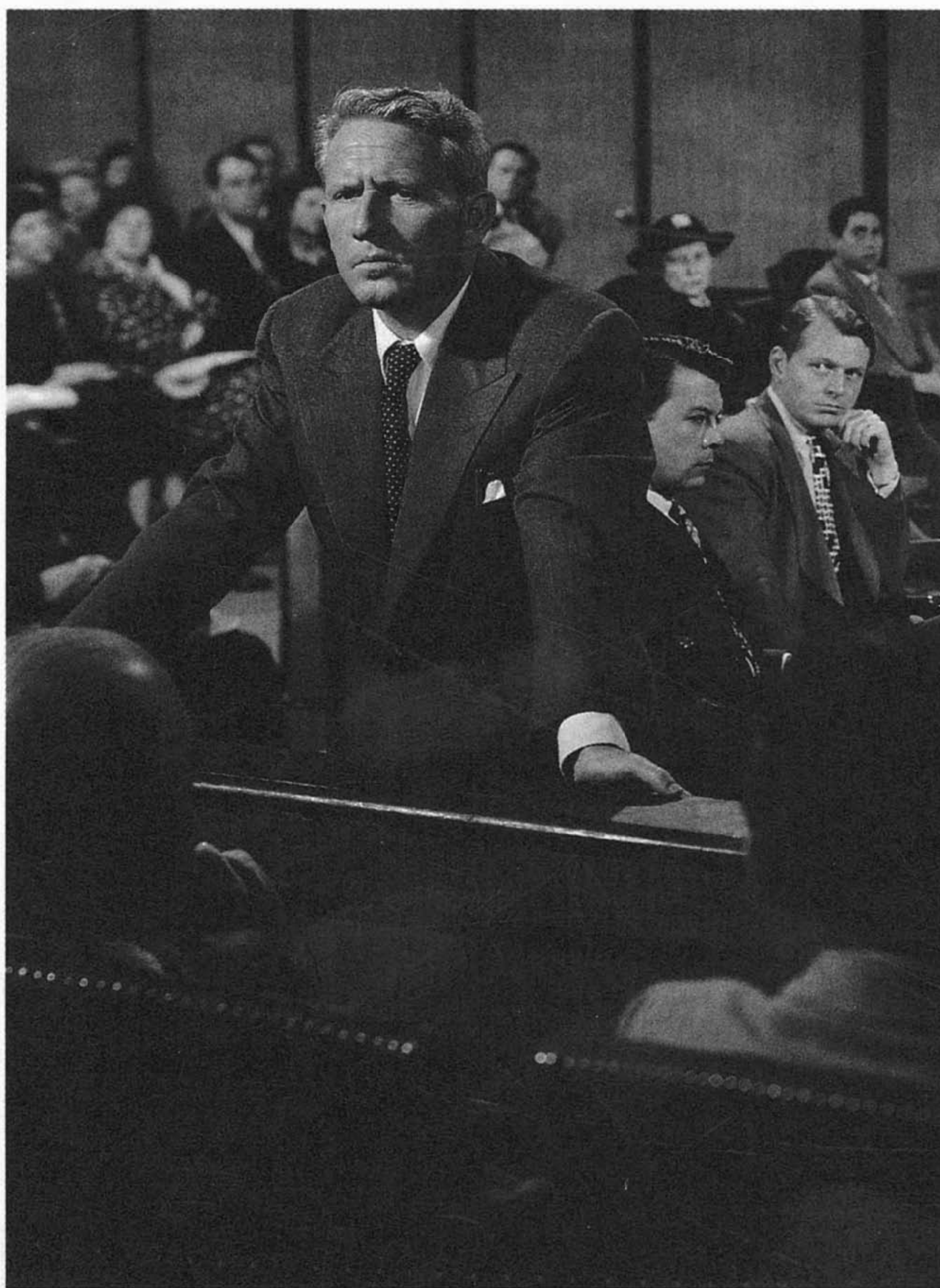
Of *Anatomy of a Murder* (1959), the prominent Boston attorney Joseph Welch said, "It's almost immoral for Jimmy Stewart to become such a good lawyer without having to work at it as I did".

Rob Reiner calls his latest film, *A Few Good Men*, a "damned good old-fashioned courtroom drama", as if confident that his audience will instinctively recognise the species. His allusion to an old-fashioned cinematic tradition carries with it connotations of heavyweight morality, integrity and stability. The classic courtroom drama locks into an idealised realism of polished oak and historical figures; memorable courtrooms are old, and those films such as Peter Yates' *Suspect* (1987) or Fred Schepisi's *A Cry in the Dark* (1988) which use (perhaps more authentic) modern courtrooms remain unsatisfying.

At times the desire for classic realism can be taken too far – Stanley Kramer, for instance, discovered he was "hung on a hook" by the physical constraints of the real courtroom when he filmed *Judgement at Nuremberg* (1961). The oppressive aged wood of Reiner's chamber in *A Few Good Men* allies his courtmartial with an established tradition, lending the action a timelessness which transcends the limitations of the veneered 90s. But beyond such superficialities, what makes an old-fashioned courtroom film?

At its bluntest, a "damned good old-fashioned courtroom drama" has to stand for something – Norman Jewison even gave his somewhat hysterical black comedy the incongruously sombre and edifying title *...And Justice For All* (1979). The classic trial film is imbued with a liberal ideology which stands up for the good and the weak and defeats the bad and the wrong. Whether it be the war-trials film *Judgement at Nuremberg* or Robert Mulligan's maudlin attack on racism in the American South *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1962), the moral remains much the same.

The McCarthy-dominated 50s was the golden age of the trial film. Films became metaphors and courtrooms represented the battles being fought in society at large. The God vs Darwin debate in *Inherit the Wind* (1960) is a smokescreen, as is the trial of the Puerto Rican boy in *Twelve Angry Men* (1956). Even Elia Kazan, the film industry's most infamous informer, sent a thinly veiled message of remorse to those he blacklisted through the concluding court scene of *On the Waterfront* (1954), in which Marlon Brando exposes the racketeers. Is it perhaps possible to decode a murder mystery like Fritz Lang's *Beyond a Reasonable Doubt* (1956), or read *Compulsion* (1959), Richard Fleischer's film about the Leopold-Loeb case, as a covert indictment of the Rosenberg executions? McCarthyism even proved a dominant factor in Otto Preminger's classic murder mystery, *Anatomy of a Murder*, where Joseph Welch was cast as the presiding judge. The significance of Welch has long since been buried, but in 1959, when the film was made, he was a household face



The epitome of American liberalism: Spencer Tracy in 'Adam's Rib'

who could command a far higher acting fee than James Stewart or Lee Remick by virtue of having been the lawyer who, on prime-time network television, inflicted on McCarthy his final humiliating defeat during the Army hearings.

Despite its aspirations to be considered alongside such precedents, and its obvious allusion to *Twelve Angry Men*, Reiner's *A Few Good Men* blurs the issues that seemed so clearly polarised in the earlier liberal fables. Who, for example, are the 'few good men' of the title? One would expect them to be the jury members, but these are mute and irrelevant extras. Perhaps the title refers to the attorneys? Yet the principal lawyer (Daniel Kaffee) is a 'son' who gets absurdly drunk on a quarter of Bourbon, and his co-counsel is a woman. Colonel Jessep, the Kurtz-like marine commanding officer, is a 'man' – this we know from his Havana cigar, his salacious fascination with female superior officers and his ability not to blink under pressure – but he is not good. Stanley Kramer's films were about good men – advocates of old-fashioned liberal values who stood up for the rights of the individual in a corrupt world, who put their cause before themselves, and who believed in their country. In Reiner's film, the only characters to expound such beliefs are the psychopathic marines. The good old-fashioned audience remains confused.

How, then, has Reiner failed? First, the casting of Tom Cruise as Daniel Kaffee, the brash, young and inexperienced attorney assigned to defend the two marines, is problematic. Kaffee has never entered a court-

room before the start of this courtmartial, yet he wins his case. In the tradition of the Hollywood courtroom drama, this is highly irregular: Maximilian Schell, the youthful defender of the Nazi doctors in *Judgement at Nuremberg*, lost.

The attorney in Hollywood has become the filmic equivalent of a Shakespearean hero – an opportunity to impress, digress and prove rhetorical prowess. The central actor-lawyer in 50s trial films was imbued with iconographic significance; Spencer Tracy alone, with appearances in *Adam's Rib* (1949), *Inherit the Wind* and *Judgement at Nuremberg*, became filmic shorthand for American liberalism. But Tracy was middle-aged, he had earned his stripes – and when an actor was deemed not quite distinguished enough, he was eased into mid-life corpulence with the assistance of padding, greyness and glasses: witness Gregory Peck in *To Kill a Mockingbird* or Orson Welles in *Compulsion*.

Tom Cruise, by contrast, still remembers his Oedipal phase; his Kaffee is a bright, amiable goofball who slobbers over his apples and needs a baseball bat to help him think. His obvious prototype is James Stewart in *Anatomy of a Murder*, whose homespun quaintness is represented by a pipe, piano and fishing tackle. But whereas Stewart's quirky accessories signify a solid, down-to-earth seniority, Cruise's affectations do not. Despite the amount of film time spent in the courtroom, *A Few Good Men* is not a courtroom drama at all, but a rites-of-passage movie, a parable of a boy on the brink of manhood who finally gains his stripes as he frees himself of the oppressive memory of his father, a grand old liberal lawyer, who, one suspects, bore a striking resemblance to James Stewart.

Perhaps the casting of Cruise is symptomatic of the demise of the archetypal old, white male lawyer? Was Paul Newman in Lumet's *The Verdict* the last of a dying breed? Trial films and their lawyers have certainly become more eclectic – Denzel Washington in *Ricochet* (1992) is a rare example of a black Hollywood district attorney, while Marlene Gorris' *A Question of Silence* (1982) is a feminist deconstruction of the genre.

The courtroom drama to which Reiner aspires was a chauvinistic domain in which women, if seen, were seldom heard. The past decade, even in Hollywood, has attempted to redress the balance with an increasing number of female lawyer roles – Cher in *Suspect*, Glenn Close in *Jagged Edge* (1985) and Kelly McGillis in *The Accused* (1988) being the most notable examples. Yet another archetype is emerging here – the modern woman lawyer, though powerful in her job, is lonely, cold and sexually dormant; her isolation from the outside world is confirmed by her inability to form a personal bond except with someone (usually a man) she meets in the courtroom. Demi Moore in *A Few Good Men* is but an inconsequential copy of even these imperfect heroes: she has little responsibility and neither friends nor a partner.

But with Allen vs Farrow live on television, who needs fiction?

'The classic trial film is imbued with a liberal ideology which stands up for the good and the weak and defeats the bad and the wrong'

The Real McCoy

Celina Smith

Despite meticulous planning and organisation, the long-awaited 'Black and White In Colour' conference, organised by the BFI, teetered like a stack of cards brought to the brink of collapse by an agenda far too ambitious for a single day. With many of the industry's prime movers and shakers gathered under one roof, a sense of occasion was unavoidable, but this only served to heighten expectations unduly. Nevertheless, I came away feeling that something historic may have been achieved.

The aim of the day was to examine black participation and representation in British television, in response to the screening of the BBC2 series *Black and White In Colour* last year. At the time, the series, which examined the role of black people within broadcasting in recent decades, triggered intense debate.

Professor Stuart Hall stole the limelight from the start. His opening keynote speech masterfully identified the major issues and laid down the agenda. As Hall sees it, there have been some positive changes in the representation of black people either side of the camera in recent years. However, these have been largely restricted to certain areas – primarily light entertainment, sport and comedy. In the fields of documentary and drama, more advances are necessary. But Hall's main attack centred on his belief that television is still failing to reflect the diversity of our multicultural society. For many television executives, 'multiculturalism' is no more than a euphemism for ghetto programming.

Like much of the rest of the conference, the first debate managed only to skim the surface of its subject. Entitled 'Multiculturalism and Beyond', it focused on the value of maintaining departments dedicated to so-called 'ethnic-minority programming'. With seven people on the panel – about four too many – it was difficult to develop a line of argument. And Narendhra Morar, Managing Editor of Multicultural Programmes at the BBC, was at the last minute unable to attend – a critical absence since along with many other producers, I had been looking forward to hearing his views on how black programme-makers could be better supported, and how high-quality black programmes could in future be made.

Much of the audience discussion revolved around the limited number of outlets available to black programme-makers. Some questioned the wisdom of abolishing departments which produce multicultural programmes; others suggested cable and satellite as alternative routes.

The second panel discussion, 'International Scenario', highlighted a particular set of frustrations faced by producers today. With less money available for foreign filming, programme-makers are increasingly forced to find co-production money. Broadcasters, meanwhile, are leaning more and more towards commissioning programme-makers abroad. The obvious upshot: even less work for programme-makers in the UK. To judge by the comments

from the floor, merely reiterating these problems was not enough – one speaker pointed out that she already knew the problems and what the conference should be doing was to suggest solutions.

Not all was doom and gloom, however. In the third debate, comedy and light entertainment emerged as one area in which there had been some significant success for black performers and programme-makers. Lenny Henry was credited for much of the breakthrough, through his portrayal of a wide range of black characters, while programmes such as *The Real McCoy* had also allowed work by new black writers to get on air. Lenny, who shared the stage with Charlie Hanson and Jonathan Powell, brought welcome light relief to the debate.

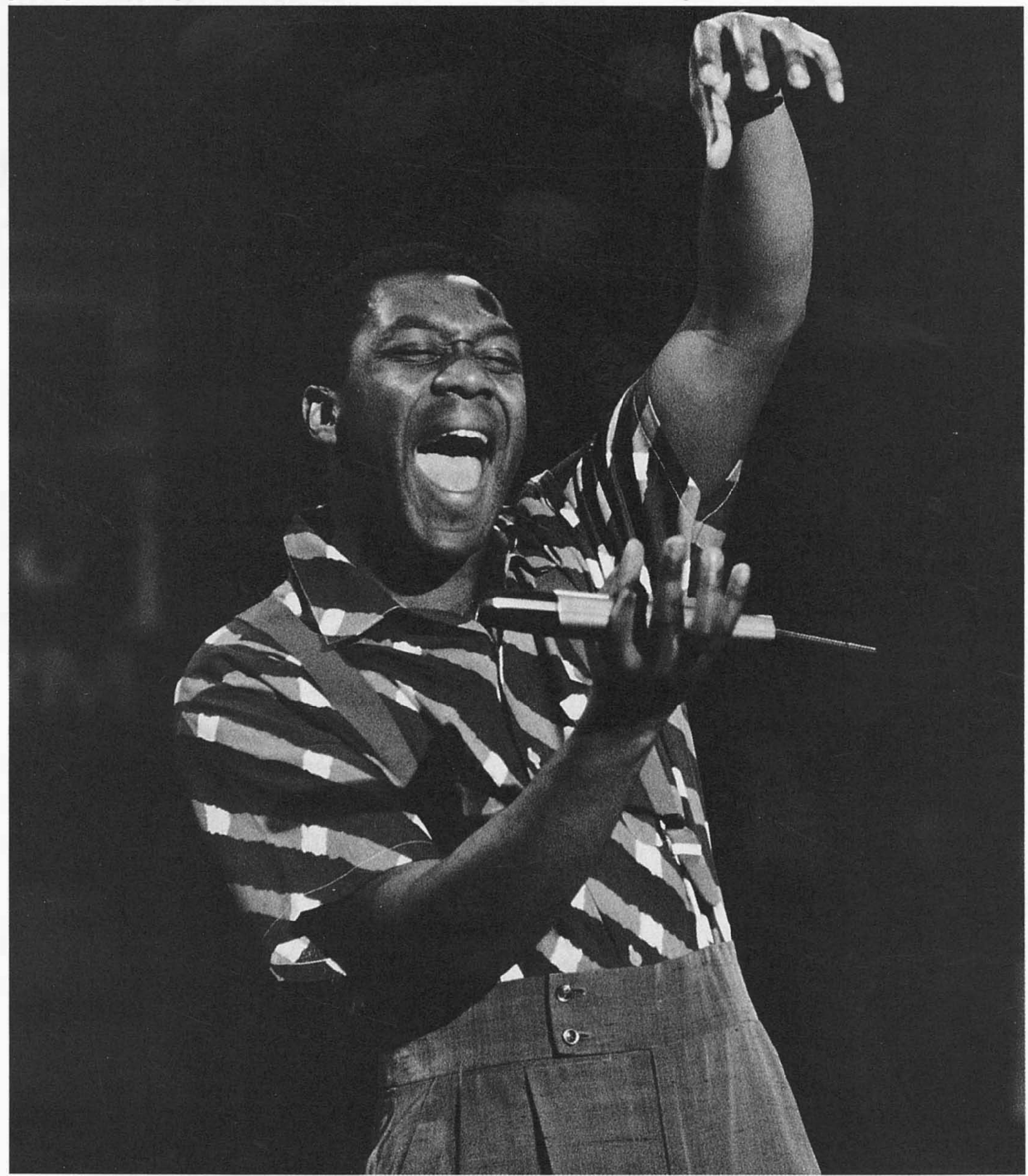
By the time the last session got under way, a general sense of frustration was beginning to build. The debate on drama ended with an impassioned speech from director Isaac Julien that summed up many participants' feelings: "What we want is a

'There have been some positive changes in the representation of black people. However, these have been largely restricted to certain areas – primarily light entertainment, sport and comedy'

piece of the action, a bit of the cake; and we've been here long enough..."

Overall, too little emphasis was placed on developing strategies – for example, the concerns of the black independent sector about aspects of the government's Green Paper on the future of the BBC were barely discussed. Two years ago, the debate over the renewal of the ITV franchises took place with scant regard for the needs of the black community. If we are to avoid making the same mistake with the BBC, it seems vital that this time there is an organised voice.

Stuart Hall summed it up when he said that the black sector would not like to meet again in ten years time knowing that it had failed to seize the opportunity to exert an influence at one of the most critical junctures in the history of British broadcasting. And so a decision was taken to set up a body to look at ways of responding to a variety of issues, including the Green Paper itself. Perhaps the pack of cards dealt a winning hand after all.



Breakthrough for black entertainers: Lenny Henry

● In November 1992, the United States woke up. While Madonna's *Sex* came and went in an Octoberfest of disappointed reviews, the Thanksgiving month was different. "Have you voted yet?" or "Did you see *Malcolm X*?" – there's no telling which of these two questions was being asked more often on the streets of Spike Lee's Brooklyn neighbourhood, the tree-lined Fort Greene. Bill Clinton might be President-elect, but in that encroaching parallel universe that is popular culture, Malcolm had become *the* elect. Which Malcolm that might be was, of course, the subject of ongoing disputes between journalists, historians, African-American intellectuals, activists, black Muslims – in short, everybody. If one amassed all that's been written about Malcolm the man, Malcolm the myth, and Spike Lee, *Malcolm X*'s director, you'd have a dossier to rival any black nationalist's FBI file. If you compiled everything that's been written about Spike Lee since his theatrical debut with *She's Gotta Have It* (1986), you'd have a book, as Laurie Anderson would say, thick enough to stun an ox.

With *Malcolm X*, Spike Lee has made not his best, but his greatest film – a movie that propels a complex, furious, little-comprehended black man into the pantheon of American icons. *Malcolm X* offers this figure of rage, rhetoric and religion as the black community's best father – not Martin Luther King Jr, but Malcolm is the father who knew best. Knew the lengths to which white racism would go, knew the psychological, economic and cultural damage slavery had inflicted on black people, understood the necessity of rage. "We didn't land on Plymouth Rock, Plymouth Rock landed

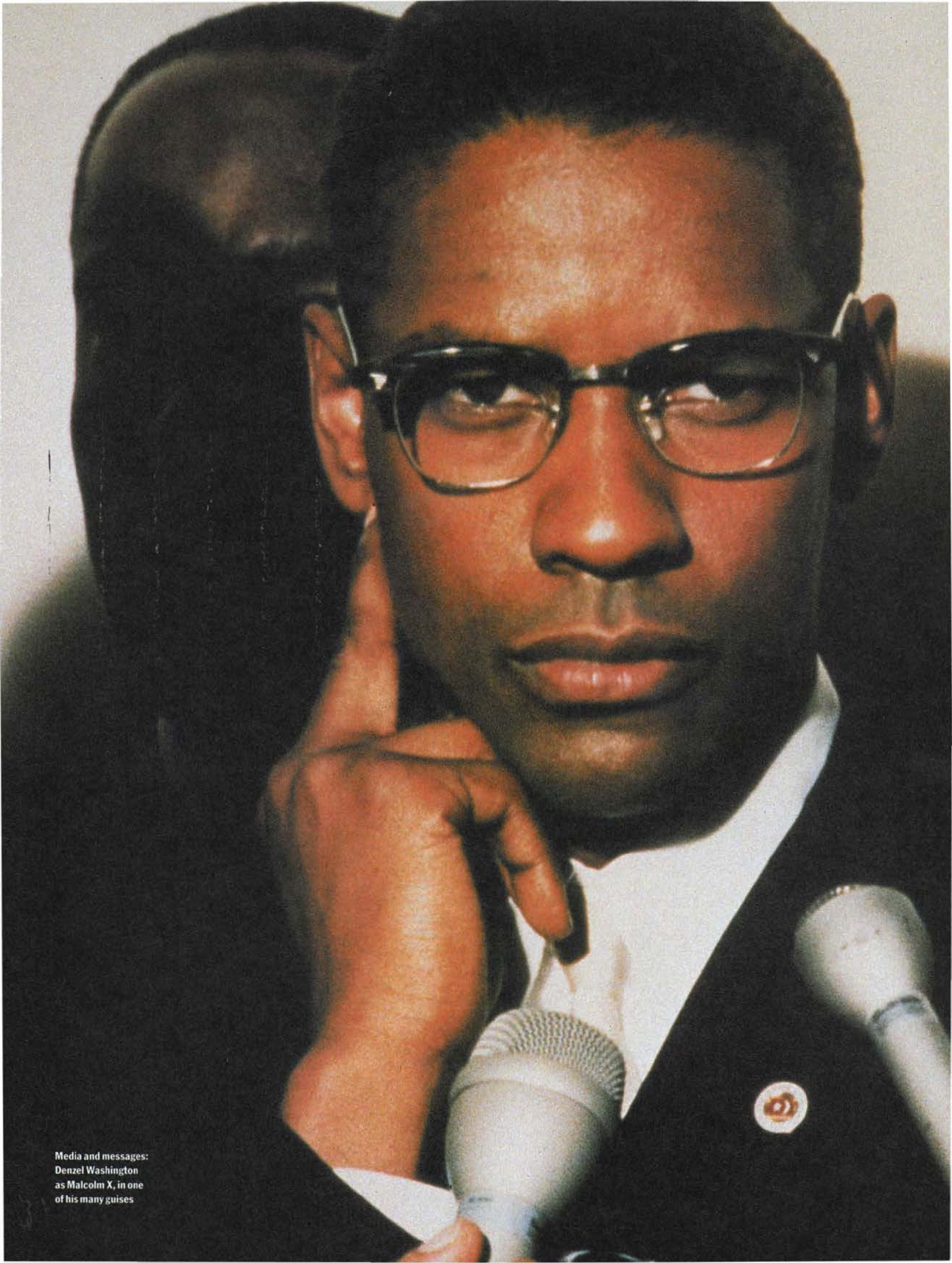
on us", shouts Denzel Washington's X. Lee's movie has muscled its way into our lives, not just by way of product tie-in – whether caps, shirts, jackets, dolls or potato chips – but with increased sales of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* and publication of 20 or so related books.

A national election and the release of a film – while it might seem impertinent, delusional even to link them, it isn't. In due time, Bill Clinton will most certainly take his place at the helm of a government of mostly white men, but for a strange cultural moment it's not completely clear who will do more for the country in the next four years: Bill or a ghost conjured up by a 35-year-old director. In mid-November, one could tune into the cable station CSPAN and watch the President-elect stroll down Georgia Avenue, Washington DC's black business belt. Out of the crowd, a well-wisher shouted, "I liked *Malcolm X*, have you seen it?" Clinton responded: "Not yet. But Jesse Jackson told me it was the best movie he'd seen in 20 years". Here, on a blustery autumn day, the unfulfilled promise of JFK by way of this sanitised version met the unfulfilled promise of *Malcolm X* by way of an immensely important, if somewhat sanitised, biopic. In no small way, Bill Clinton and *Malcolm X* proclaim the end of an era; and each suggests the promise, and necessity, of change. There is an overwhelming sense that *Malcolm X*, the movie, will be looked back on as a turning point, not just for the nation, but for the film's director. If Oliver Stone's *JFK* could lead to the opening of sealed congressional reports, what might *X* bring about?

For the past 12 years, popular-cultural figures have provided us with much of what ►

From 'She's Gotta Have It' to 'Malcolm X', Spike Lee has been an artful film-maker whose cinematic, and cultural, achievements can only now be grasped.
By Lisa Kennedy

IS MALCOLM X THE RIGHT THING?



Media and messages:
Denzel Washington
as Malcolm X, in one
of his many guises

◀ was counter to the deep Republican freeze. America had become a place where lefty intellectuals slipped into comas. Those who didn't went to sleep depressed and woke up to a Spike Lee, a Madonna, and a slew of rap and hip-hop artists. With the exception of the most life-and-death activisms – Aids and reproductive rights work – political practice had for the most part become the domain of the far or Christian right. So these celebrities became our cause. At the very least they were interesting; more often, they provided a way of posing necessary questions in a brutally dulling time. Under the sign of the one-two punch Reagan-Bush administrations, Spike Lee and the Material Girl encouraged us to reconsider our most important categories: race and sex (and, when it was bound up with colour, class). That in the past few months each has paid homage to the other's savvy only highlights their awareness of their place in the *Zeitgeist*. And that both Spike Lee and Madonna have produced – not only within a month of each other, but as the era in which they made their mark draws to a close – what they consider their most daring works to date poses a question for them as much as for us: what's next?

But for now, when what is ahead is not entirely clear, what has been achieved remains remarkable. Spike Lee has had his share of a brand of left-handed compliment: he is hailed as a marketeer extraordinaire, a brilliant divining rod of black sentiment, a director of middling vision in the right place at the right cultural moment. He's a phenomenon, but he's no 'artist'. Underneath much of this rhetoric resides a troubling adage, and it goes something like this: white men can't jump but they are the only people who can be 'pure' artists. White men are historically unencumbered, while everyone else is burdened *a priori* by sociological baggage. Even today, features by filmmakers of every colour, queerness or femaleness are invariably met with expectations more appropriate to documentary. Authenticity and realism become the measure of all things that come from the margins. Too often, the critical apparatus is not up to the task of understanding the difference between real life and the movies. If Mookie in *Do the Right Thing* (1989) throws a trash can through Sal's window and ignites a riot, should we accuse the director of fanning the flames of racial hatred, or should we see in that moment a parable of the depths of anger in our cities? Mookie didn't start the fires in Los Angeles, he forewarned of them.

Trials and gifts

Lee has always given us a lesson in what is unique about film as a medium, exposing its paradoxical position as both the product of one director's vision and a sometimes collaborative, sometimes antagonistic – always entrepreneurial – undertaking. Could it be that Lee has made so many uncomfortable not just because the content of his movies needles, but because he has also debunked, or made complicated, the dream-factory enterprise – not in some avant-garde way, but as poet Audre Lorde has written, with the master's tools. It is no exaggeration to see Lee's adventures in movie-

making as providing a game plan that could be adopted and modified by Latinos, Asians, women, lesbians and gays. Indeed, when 1991 was bannered as the year of black films, with 19 features released, the director was dutifully credited as having pried open the door.

As autumn 1992 neared, Lee was quoted less about his vision of Malcolm and more about his trials in getting the film through post-production. Instead of doing his earlier riff on why a white man can't direct a film about this particular icon, Lee told of his trials with Warner Bros, especially his experience with the completion bond company, which Warners brought in to oversee the financing of the film. In effect, they closed the bank mid-production. The subtitle to Lee's *By Any Means Necessary: the Trials and Tribulations of the Making of Malcolm X* might be, "while ten million motherfuckers are fucking with you!"

In the summer, Lee held a press conference to announce the "gifts" – not investments, but outright donations – given him by African-American athletes and entertainers to enable him to complete the film. A post-credit sequence in *X* acknowledges this community of backers – Bill Cosby, Michael Jordan, Janet Jackson, to name a few. In shifting from a lesson on how to experience his film to a discussion of the ins and outs of getting it made, Lee has reminded us that the experience of film, especially for a black director, is about more than auteur theory – there are too many committees, money folks and the bottom line to consider.

When interviewed about *Malcolm X*, Lee has repeatedly said that his five other films have led to the making of this one. While this is a fairly typical artist's line, in Lee's case its truth can be demonstrated. In *She's Gotta Have It*, Nola Darling paints a mural called *May 19th*, after Malcolm's birthday; in *School Daze* (1988), an overserious undergrad activist-about-campus is teased with "yo, ease up Malcolm". Most obviously, the wandering fool Smiley in *Do the Right Thing* hawks doctored photographs of Malcolm, Martin and the two together, on the streets of the tragically heroic Bed-Stuy neighbourhood. But what Lee means goes deeper than the traces of the man that track across his films. The body of Lee's work has articulated, even as it has created, a kind of Afro-American-centricity, something that can be seen to answer Malcolm's call for an intelligent black culture, one that would lay claim to our history, our variety and, yes, our reasonable fury. Certainly others before Lee have answered that call: Amiri Baraka, to name a Lee precursor and nemesis.

Lee has forged a cinema that engages, even brawls, with white racist attitudes towards blacks, while striving to foreground the tales (almost exclusively New York stories) of African Americans. At times Lee's imagination has shown itself to be sorely limited. Since *School Daze*, he has taken regular hits from black feminists, me included, for his portrayal of African-American women. Often it has felt as if 'Uplift the Race' had been edited to read: 'Uplift the Race, the Men first'. In *X*, too, the female characters, even Malcolm's wife Betty Shabazz, are vague shadows in a story about men. To some

degree, Malcolm and the Nation of Islam help you to excuse the director. After all, women do not fare particularly well in much of Malcolm's rhetoric. (This is definitely not Shabazz's story, the one where she left three times, but Malcolm's, and is close to his autobiography.)

If one wanted to be essentialist, something no one in the so-called black community can afford, one could say *X* offers the woman viewer very little, except as it relates to the plight of her man, her son, her father. Author Terry McMillan's introduction to *By Any Means Necessary* attests eloquently to this predicament. "I sit on the edge of my son's bed... When I pull the covers up and kiss his small forehead, I know that no matter how much I love him, no matter how much I try to teach him self-respect and respect for others, when he goes out into the world, he's going to be the kind of man he wants to be. I just pray he won't be one of those young men in red or on the corner or hitting the pipe or making babies without bearing the responsibility. And I think of Malcolm. I pray that when he grows up he has one-tenth of Malcolm's courage, insight, wisdom".

Black familiar

Wake up. From the final words of *School Daze* to Malcolm X's admonishment, this has been a Lee mantra, an uplift imperative. "You need to wake up", says a campus radical to a group of complacent peers who attend a black college that hasn't divested itself of its South African holdings. Wake up to the political realities and responsibilities of blackness, American-style.

Like an African drum rhythm, *She's Gotta Have It*, *School Daze*, *Do the Right Thing*, *Mo' Better Blues* (1990), *Jungle Fever* (1991), and *Malcolm X* have called to each other, repeating gestures and lines of dialogue, and dropping ancestors' names with great frequency. These repetitions demand a close reading, a thorough working knowledge of Lee's oeuvre. For example, the block that the NOI convert Malcolm walks on the way to see a running buddy from his days in Harlem is also the strip Flipper Purify travels to find his crack-addicted brother, Gator. Both scenes are punctuated by shots of black prostitutes plying their trade. The assassins that fell Malcolm in *X* are made up of some of the same actors who played the frat boys of *School Daze*: does this clarify what Lee thinks of those characters or complicate our feelings about the assassins, or both? No other film-maker seems to be rethreading meaning by the use of repetition as much as Lee, with the exception of Brian De Palma, whose *Raising Cain* is like a continual flashback to earlier work.

A fondness for recasting, reminiscent of Coppola or Scorsese only more so, has been an extra filmic force in Lee's work. One of the immediate charms of *School Daze*, which sported a cast of hundreds, was the critical mass of African-American talent brought together for the project. One would have to go back to Negro musicals such as *Porgy and Bess* or *Carmen Jones* to approximate the same numbers. Lee, and casting director Robi Reed, have built up an impressive talent bank. Some of the actors who have appeared in more than one of Spike Lee's joints include his sister Joie, father Bill, brother



RONALD GRANT

New York stories:
'School Daze', top;
'Do the Right Thing',
centre; Wesley Snipes in
'Jungle Fever', bottom

David, Alva Rogers, Giancarlo Esposito, Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee, Denzel Washington, Samuel L. Jackson, Wesley Snipes, Debi Mazar, John Turturro, Raye Dowell, Veronica Webb, and Lonette McKee.

While certain themes – skin colour, hair, paternity – have been regulars in Lee's ensemble of meanings, some of the shot choices made by Lee and cinematographer Ernest Dickerson have become familiar too. Skewed, screwy, in other words, signature camera angles made their most witty and original appearance in *Do the Right Thing*, and then reappeared to varying degrees in *Mo' Better Blues*, *Jungle Fever* and finally, startlingly, in the last minutes of *Malcolm X*. In *Jungle Fever* Dickerson and Lee introduced an idiosyncratic travelling shot, where the characters are viewed from below and seem to be moving on the same plane as the camera. It is an extraordinary and self-conscious shot and a very isolating take, one that is very much Lee's own. And in the last 20 minutes of *X*, he employs it to its most painfully existential effect.

I have often written about what I dub the "Black Familiar", a kind of African-American madeleine – a moment in art when what is common parlance, an everyday part of being or growing up, rears its beautiful and tender head. Lee more than any director before him, with the possible exception of Charles Burnett, has consistently put images or dialogue on film that have flooded the viewer with the remembrance of things past or recognition of things present. Mars Blackmon asking Nola Darling to grease his scalp, or the casual hostility of a Kentucky Fried Chicken counter girl, or the over-the-top importance given a pair of Nikes – it's not until you see what you've been missing that you realise how desperately you'd been missing it. That the everyday moments that constituted one's upbringing never made it to screen was a repressed given for the African-American filmgoer. Spike Lee has said to millions of African Americans: this is something from your life.

Of course some part of that everyday is deeply tainted by racism. Lisa Jones, who is co-author of three of Lee's the-making-of books, recently pointed to a scene in *X* when Malcolm is in prison and is reading the Webster's dictionary definitions of 'black' and 'white' – the camera zooming from the negative meanings of black to the positive meanings of white – as an example of Lee's capacity to capture in a single scene a psycho-socio-racial moment that would require pages of explication. But Lee's greatest legacy has been his refusal of closure. While there are always annoying hints that Lee the ideologue wants to lead the viewer to a particular conclusion, these have usually been offset by the desire of Lee the artist/activist to render the world in all its messiness.

Critics, of course, have latched on to Lee the ideologue, because soundbites are this nation's junk food, and the director has made it easy for them to focus on that defensive, prickly personality that tries to control (sometimes truncate) the meaning of his own creations. But the beauty of films like *Jungle Fever*, and especially *Do the Right Thing*, has been just how much they

resist closure. In the US, the opposite of closure isn't complexity or ambiguity; it's a sequel. So the fact that Lee's work opens questions up, frustrates, leaves problems unresolved, is a radical act. Both *Do the Right Thing* and *Jungle Fever* have allowed the viewer to find the seeming protagonist an asshole and the possible antagonist fairly sympathetic. That Sal of *Do the Right Thing* or Annabella Sciorra's character in *Jungle Fever* are two of Lee's most humane characters and are white attests to something more finely tuned than all the director's "I was robbed" (he was) tendencies.

If we are supposed to identify with Dap, the campus radical in *School Daze*, we cannot help being drawn to Julian (played sadistically and seductively by Giancarlo Esposito), leader of the Gamma Phi Gamma fraternity. But no one speaks the truth 100 per cent of the time in a Spike Lee movie, and here Dap is also an overbearing 'race man' and Julian a meanspirited bully. (Ironically, in this regard, *X* is Lee's least complex venture: Malcolm is the character we are meant to care about from beginning to end, and we do.) That *School Daze* ends with Dap and Julian looking into each other's eyes in a mood of reconciliation reveals the basic optimism Lee harbours for black people.

Bringing it all home

Of course the movies have a semblance of narrative closure: Flipper returns to his wife; a new day begins in Bed-Stuy; a campus is reunited in the wake of much cruelty; a father teaches his son to play the trumpet. But credits sequences are the single most important structural element Lee employs to crack open the meaning of his own films. They act as a bridge between the reel life and real life, the two realms that Lee, and we the audience, inhabit. *She's Gotta Have It* begins with a quote from Zora Neale Hurston. *School Daze* opens to a black screen and the sound of creaking ships, then comes a visual litany that begins with an archival sketch of the innards of a slave ship and continues with striking black-and-white photographs of African Americans from Jackie Robinson to Billie Holiday, intermixed with scenes of Civil Rights protests and Malcolm and Jesse Jackson holding a newspaper that carries the headline, "King Murdered". Actress Rosie Perez's kickboxing dance to one of Public Enemy's many anthems to black rage, 'Fight the Power', presages our entry into the tragic life of *Do the Right Thing*'s Bed-Stuy. A snapshot of a handsome, smiling Yusuf Hawkins – the 19-year-old black man attacked and shot by a gang of white youths when he and some friends went shopping for a used car in Bensonhurst, New York – is part of the prologue to *Jungle Fever*, which is dedicated to his memory. While the credits sequence of *Mo' Better Blues* is more traditional, it strives for different associations: black arts, jazz, Lee's own family history. Now *X* begins *Patton*-like, with a full screen of the American flag, the intoning voice of Washington, intercut with the footage that lit the fuse to the LA riots – the videotaped beating of Rodney King. As Malcolm speaks, the clubs swing, and the flag begins a burn into an X.

Lee's epilogues bring it all home. The ►

◀ most controversial – *Do the Right Thing* – uses quotes on violence and non-violence from Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr as counterpoint to burnt-out tableaux of Sal's Pizzeria. What are we to think? A tragedy of Greek proportions has befallen a neighbourhood, on some level it is entirely unclear what the "right thing" is – and Spike delivers this one-two punch. Martin: "Violence as a way of achieving social justice is both impractical and immoral". Malcolm: "You and I have to preserve the right to do what is necessary to bring an end to that situation, and it doesn't mean that I advocate violence, but at the same time I'm not against using violence in self-defence. I don't even call it violence when it's self-defence, I call it intelligence". *Malcolm X* ends as resonantly, though perhaps more optimistically.

In the introduction to *By Any Means Necessary*, Lee writes, "I was definitely not inspired by the blaxploitation film era of the late 60s and early 70s. Except for Melvin Van Peebles's *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song*, I didn't even watch those films back then, although I've seen almost all of them since. But not back then". No, instead, Lee's mother Jacquelyn was taking him to see *Help!* and James Bond movies, and to Broadway for *The King and I*.

But Lee doesn't have to tell us which are his favourite films for us to guess. There's the Oz-like fade to colour in the middle of *She's Gotta Have It* and the merrily daring Jigaboo-Wannabee sparring à la *West Side Story* in *School Daze*; in *X*, there's the playfully goofy moment between Shorty (Lee) and Red (Washington) when they play at gangsters. Shorty: "I wanna be Bogart". Washington (in his best Bogie imitation): "You're too short to be Bogart". Bang. Bang. In a little-remarked moment of cinematic quotation, *Do the Right Thing*'s vector of rage Radio Raheem (played by another Lee regular, Bill Nunn) tells Mookie the story of LOVE and HATE. If the scene rings bells, you only have to think of Charles Laughton's cinema-studies classic *Night of the Hunter*, where a psychopathic Robert Mitchum posing as a preacherman relates the same eerie sermon.

My favourite things

In 1987, the year after *She's Gotta Have It* called attention to a young independent film-maker out of NYU, playwright Adrienne Kennedy wrote the memoir *People Who Led To My Plays*. In it she provides a compendium of figures she credits with having changed the course of her work: her mother, Jews, Mrs Miniver, Mildred Pierce, her husband.

If Lee were to put together a similar list, which are the names that would appear? No doubt, his mother, Joe Morgan, Willie Randolph, his father, Martin Scorsese, George Balanchine, Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, Malcolm X, Muhammed Ali and many, many more. The list would be a magnificent, and in some instances surprising, cry. When African Americans create, it has too often been their blackness alone that is latched on to by (usually) white critics. Let Kennedy's book present a guide to understanding more fully the complexity of the African-American artist.

'Malcolm X' opens in the UK on 5 March

DOING THE JOB

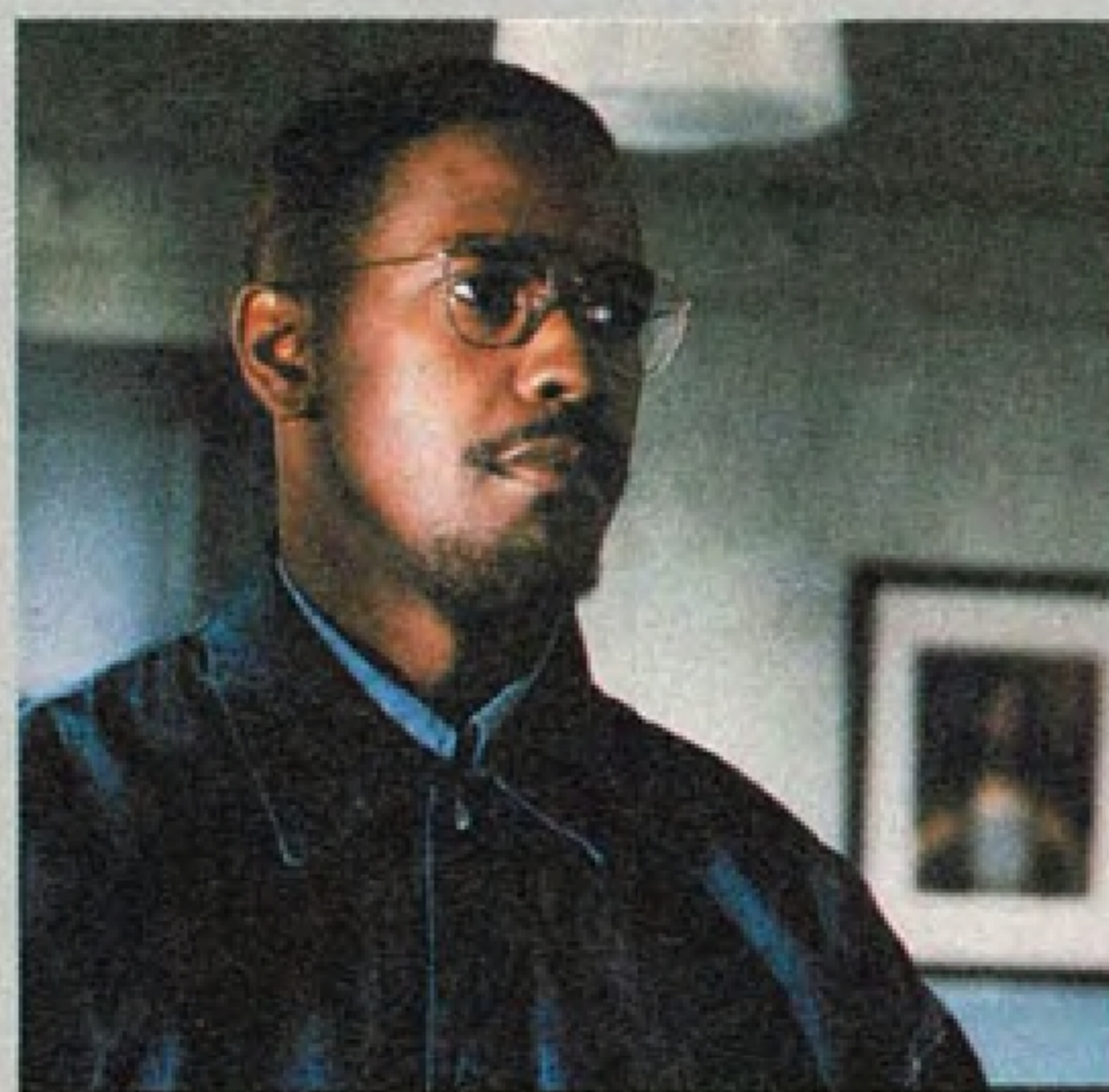
Spike Lee talks to James Verniere about 'Malcolm X', white audiences, black Muslims and bad press

James Verniere: How long have you been thinking about making 'Malcolm X'?
Spike Lee: Since I made *Do the Right Thing*. I read *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* – the most important book I'll ever read – when I was in junior high school. I began to look at the world with a new set of eyes. It showed me how we are portrayed in the media, how African-American stars in sport and show business smile and say all the right things, but never speak out, and how it all ties in. *Malcolm X* often comes down very hard on Christianity, especially on African-American Christian ministers. Do you share his views? He had a thing about Dr King, but a lot of that might have been jealousy because King was the object of so much adulation.

At the conclusion of 'Do the Right Thing', you quote both Martin Luther King, who speaks in conciliatory terms, and Malcolm X, whose words have been interpreted as a call to arms. What was your point?
I think we have to get out of this either/or thing. I think black America has to form a synthesis between the two views and make it work. *In a story in a recent issue of 'New Yorker', the writer argues that Dr King appealed to the middle class, while Malcolm X spoke to the more oppressed, lower classes, the people in the ghettos. Why was Malcolm X's message stronger for you, the product of a middle-class background and education?*
I don't think Malcolm's message excluded the middle class; he was just strongest among the underclass. To me, Malcolm's greatest power was that he could make everything so crystal clear, so simple. He'd say, "A plus B equals C", and you'd smack your head and think, "I never saw it that way before".

In the newsclips you use at the end of 'Malcolm X', I noticed several shots of him smiling and looking cheerful. But the only pictures I remember of him on television or in newspapers when I was a boy made him look angry and accusing.
Malcolm had his own photographer, and one day he got upset with him because the guy was taking pictures of him looking mean and angry. He said, "I don't need you to do that. I can get the *New York Times* to do that". People have to realise that the media know what they're doing. They know how to shape a person's image and make the American public believe it.

I wonder if we'll ever see a movie by Spike Lee released without a host of combative headlines and contentious, often negative stories about you to go with it.



Lone voice: Lee's Malcolm X

I long for that day. It's not that I wake up in the morning and say, "What can I come up with today?" I get misquoted a lot. It must look as though I slip somebody some money so I'll get blasted in the papers and get publicity for the film. But this stuff always just seems to happen. *You don't enjoy the attention at all?*

It gets to be a nuisance after a while because I end up having to explain stuff I never said in the first place. *A cover story about you in a recent issue of 'Esquire' magazine ran with the headline: 'Spike Lee Hates Your Cracker Ass'. What did you think of that?*

You know, I was on a plane and somebody sitting next to me was reading that story and he turned to me and said, "Did you really say that?" No, I did not say that. I don't feel that way. I never have. The writer from *Esquire* (a white woman named Barbara Grizzuti Harrison) turned me off from the first minute of the interview because I guess she felt she had to tell me all about her black boyfriend and how they went to see Billie Holiday and... Right there, I stopped her and said, "C'mon, you're here to do a job. I'm here to do a job. Let's talk about Malcolm X. You don't have to convince me you're a bleeding-heart liberal. It's not necessary". Then she asks, "Do you have any white friends, Spike?" What the fuck is that? What white film director would get asked questions like that?

Do you think the media are racist?
Yes. Madonna swears by that old saying, "Print anything you like about me as long as you spell my name right". I'd rather be out of the papers than see some false shit about how I'm anti-Semitic or how I hate white people. I'd rather not be in the papers at all, whether or not my name is spelled right.

Those same accusations were levelled against Malcolm X. What do you think his legacy is?
I think the resurgence of Malcolm is about a void that young people are trying to fill. Ossie Davis said it best when he delivered the eulogy at Malcolm's funeral: "He was our shining black prince, our manhood". Young black men today need role models, and it's a shame we have to dig up a dead man instead of finding someone who walks among us. *Don't you fulfil that kind of role for a lot of people? Aren't you a kind of role model, at least to young black film-makers who've sprung up in the last two or three years?*
If I really considered myself to be a role model, it would be a hindrance. It means you can't have anything negative connected with you – Michael Jordan can't be photographed drinking a beer. I'm an artist. I can't wear that straightjacket. *But don't you think that the integrity of your work and the discussion it generates make you a role model, someone worthy of the respect and admiration of young people?*
I'm not saying that's not possible. I just try to lead by example. I think that 20 years from now, black athletes will dominate in golf because kids



Prophet in the wilderness: Denzel Washington as Malcolm X talks to those who won't hear

today have seen Michael Jordan with a golf club in his hand. I remember at the first LA premiere of *She's Gotta Have It*, a skinny black kid walked up to me and said, "Hi, my name is John Singleton and I'm in high school now, but I'm going to make movies just like you". For me, that's where the reward is, though that's not to say I'm the father of black cinema. I'm just going down the same road that Ossie Davis, Oscar Micheaux and Melvin Van Peebles went down. Their success made it easier for me, and every success I have makes it easier for others. Young black kids need concrete examples of people like them who make films, because until you see someone like you doing something, you can never imagine yourself doing it.

So how do you feel now about Matty Rich, John Singleton, Reginald and Warrington Hudlin, Carl Franklin... the new black film-makers who have sprung up in your wake? I think it's great. I never wanted to be the only one out there. Let them take some of the bricks.

Do you think this film will appeal to white audiences?

Yes. I've always had a large white following, but it's been kept quiet because if that gets out, it just empowers me even more. This film is going to crush that old axiom that white audiences will not go to see black people in a movie, unless it's a musical or a comedy or an Eddie Murphy film. When that axiom dies, studios can no longer tell black film-makers they can't give them a decent budget because their films are too much of a risk.

Your budget for 'Malcolm X' was about \$34 million, but you only got \$28 million from Warner Bros. How did that work out? We raised the extra money because I kicked in half my salary and because we got gifts from people like Michael Jordan, Bill Cosby and Oprah Winfrey. The important thing is that it looks like there's a \$60 million budget when you see it on screen. I told Warner Bros

at our very first meeting that this was going to be an epic on the scale of a David Lean film, and that it was going to cost over \$30 million and be over three hours long. And you have to remember that \$34 million is not a lot of money for an epic. But whenever I asked Warners for more money, I was told, "But Spike, you made *She's Gotta Have It* for less than \$5,000. Why do you need more money now?" I've had my differences with Warner Bros, but never with the people who market and sell the pictures. Barry Reardon, Rob Friedman, John Dartigue, Charlotte G. Kandel – they are behind the film 100 per cent, and they are going to sell it.

At one time, 'Malcolm X' was set to be directed by Norman Jewison, but you publicly complained that the film should be directed by a black director, presumably yourself. Why was that?

It wasn't a personal thing. Norman Jewison is a fine film-maker, but he wasn't the person for this job. I've never said that only black people can direct black films, and only white people can direct white films. But I think there's no way that someone who wasn't Italian-American could have done what Francis Coppola and Martin Scorsese did in films like *The Godfather* and *GoodFellas*. Somebody else could have done those films, but they wouldn't have had that flavour.

As usual in your films, you've cast yourself in 'Malcolm X' in a part designed primarily to provide comic relief.

In basketball terms, I'm like the sixth man off the bench – I'm a spot player, a utility man, a person with limited abilities who knows what his role is, doesn't try to play outside his game, gets the job done and lets the real actors take over – Denzel Washington, Ossie Davis, Ruby Dee, John Turturro, Anthony Quinn, people like that. *Your film is being released at a time when racial tensions are peaking in America. What do events such as the Rodney King beating and the riots in Los Angeles say about racism in this country?*

I think the inclusion of the Rodney King video footage in the opening of our film, along with the image of the burning American flag and the words of Malcolm X, say that things haven't changed much. Things have opened up to some individuals, but not to the masses. There are more black people in the underclass than ever before: under Reagan and Bush, the country seemed to be moving backwards.

What can this movie do for the masses?

What can any work of art do? We want people to come out of the film spiritually uplifted and enlightened. *In the past, you've been accused of being a provocateur – a columnist for 'New York' magazine once accused you of trying to incite riots with 'Do the Right Thing'.*

Do you think that sort of criticism is racist?

In a lot of ways, yes. How is it that black audiences are going to see a film and then re-enact what they saw on the screen, while the white masses can go in droves to see *Terminator 2* with no problem? How many cops did Arnold Schwarzenegger kill in the first *Terminator* movie? Did we hear any complaints from the police about that? Yet Ice T does a song which is pure fantasy, and the whole world comes down on him.

Do you think some of your potential white audience might be turned off by the impression that Malcolm X doesn't belong to them?

One of Malcolm's biggest regrets was that he once told a young white co-ed that there was nothing she could do to help improve the conditions of black people in America. Later, he changed his mind. We wrote that scene and shot it, but we had to cut it out...

I think Malcolm belongs to anyone who is ready to hear his message.

Was there any thought of having Alex Haley, the co-author of the Malcolm X autobiography, appear as a character?

He was a character in one version of the script, but I felt it was not the right thing to do. The film should not be about Malcolm X telling his story to Alex Haley.

There was also a David Mamet version of the script.

Mamet wrote that script for Sidney Lumet when Lumet was attached to the project. The script that I rewrote was by James Baldwin and Arnold Perl. Unfortunately, Baldwin is not mentioned in the credits because his sister, who controls his estate, petitioned the Screenwriters' Guild to remove it. Her objection was that we had rewritten a lot of it, but I think she made a mistake.

How concerned were you about the reaction of Louis Farrakhan, the leader of the Nation of Islam? Elijah Muhammad is still a revered figure to many Muslims today, and Farrakhan is reportedly concerned about how you portray him in the film.

I flew to Chicago to discuss the film with Farrakhan, and he let me know that he'd be watching very closely. He wouldn't say anything until he saw the film. But he didn't want us to trash the image of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad. He let me know that he would be very upset if we did.

And how would his "upset" manifest itself?

I might find out. He hasn't seen the film yet, and there are things in it I know he's not going to like.

Despite some striking similarities, your film isn't 'JFK'. You don't speculate about who killed Malcolm X, you present the assassination as a matter of fact.

I don't think there's any doubt that the Nation of Islam was behind the assassination. The five assassins were from Temple Number 25 in Newark, New Jersey. That's not to say that the Honorable Elijah Muhammad ordered the killing, but somebody in Chicago gave the word. And the FBI and the CIA were also involved – they knew it was about to happen but stood back and did nothing to stop it.

You have no problem stating that as fact?

It's common knowledge, and there are recently released FBI files to support it. *Why do you have such vocal critics within the black press? Such influential New York journalists as Armond White and Stanley Crouch are among your most vehement detractors.*

It would be presumptuous for me to think that all black critics are going to love my work. Black people are among the most disunited people on earth – I mean, Stanley 'Crotch' wrote a story about *Jungle Fever* in which he mentioned my height about ten times. What's that got to do with anything? *Have you had a chance to think about your next movie?*

I'm going to rest, refuel and crank up again. I don't know what I'll be doing next, but it will be a small film.

What do you see as the future for you and African-American film-makers? Is it risky for directors to pigeonhole themselves by making films for a specific market?

I don't think there's one specific film any black film-maker should be making, because there's not one monolithic audience out there. Every film-maker should be allowed to make the film he or she wants to make. But I hope each of us strives to make great cinema, because if not, we'll just be another trend, and we'll soon be over.

Has Whoopi Goldberg become a different kind of black female movie icon? By Andrea Stuart

● In a recent article in the *Village Voice*, Marpessa Dawn Outlaw, outlining the many obstacles for black female film-makers in “Gollywood”, jokingly includes on her list the problem of how to make a movie without using Whoopi to play “all the major roles”. It is an oblique acknowledgment of Goldberg’s solitary supremacy in the curious history of the black female in Hollywood.

It is a position which is under even greater scrutiny with the imminent release of Spike Lee’s three-hour blockbuster, *Malcolm X*. For while the men-only club that is New Black Cinema (Lee, John Singleton, Mario Van Peebles, Matty Rich *et al*) has finally got its first epic, black women directors such as Julie Dash

MAKING WHOOP



Clothing the woman: Whoopi Goldberg has offended middle-class black America less by her choice of roles than by her choice of clothes, both in real life and in films such as Penny Marshall’s ‘Jumpin’ Jack Flash’, above

lament that they can’t even get themselves arrested in Hollywood, far less a five-picture, multi-million dollar deal like the one Spike has managed to pull off. But this is nothing new. Black women have always hovered like reticent servants on the edge of American cinema – eternal cyphers manipulated to reflect the ever-shifting state of play between the races. And whatever the seeming variety in black women’s roles, there have only really been two types of cinematic coloured girl.

The first, of course, is Beulah, she of the brick bosom and bulging eyes, Hattie McDaniel pulling tight the stays on Miss Scarlett’s corset, the woman whose heavenly charge was to keep those “beautiful white babies” safe from harm. The other is Dorothy Dandridge, the tragic mulatto, a beautiful brown moth about to be singed in the dangerous fires of miscegenation. The legacy of this model’s bright, light skin can be seen in the faces of Robin Givens, Whitney Houston, the carefully bleached Miss Ross and every single one of Spike Lee’s heroines – barring, of course, his sister Joie Lee.

Goldberg’s unique success is to have avoided both female stereotypes. Indeed, cinematically she is not really constructed as a woman at all – neither nurturer nor siren, the faithful drudge of the ante-bellum South or the funky chick born to walk the wild side of the city’s mean streets, her movie persona is more in the tradition of asexual ‘coon’ entertainers such as Amos and Andy or Bill ‘Bonjangles’ Robinson. The ‘coon’, a lovable black buffoon, the light-hearted cousin of the harassed but ever-faithful Uncle Tom, has roots as old as Hollywood itself. As far back as *The Ten Little Pickaninnies* (1904), black actors were cast as harmless, wacky, curiously pre-sexual, ‘don’t you just love ‘em’ characters who never seem to grow up.

But what about Whoopi? In 1986, in *Jumpin’ Jack Flash*, she played Terry Doolittle, a computer programmer who accidentally receives a message from a British agent trapped behind the Iron Curtain. Infatuated, she determines to save him, and a series of comic events ensues, including one in which Goldberg is dragged through the streets of New York trapped inside a telephone booth. Her eyes ‘a poppin’, screaming madly, you can’t help but be reminded of the comically fearful Butterfly McQueen in *Gone With the Wind*, the classic ‘pickaninny’ running down the drive at Tara screaming “the yankees are coming, the yankees are coming”. According to black film critic Donald Bogle, the makers of *Jumpin’ Jack Flash* saw Goldberg as “an

asexual creature from another universe” – and they weren’t alone. When she took the role of Celie in Spielberg’s version of Alice Walker’s *The Color Purple* (1985), one critic went so far as to compare her to E.T.

But looks aside, part of Goldberg’s other-worldliness (ignoring her stint on *Star Trek*) stems from the fact that she rarely appears with other black people. Until her recent role in *Sarafina!* (1992), she has never had a black male love interest, and there are few indicators in her films of a cultural context – for example, a family. The black lieutenant in *Sister Act* (1992) may seem an exception, but even he is nothing to her – not a lover or friend, not blood, just a token black cop in a sea of white cameos.

The Color Purple, the only real exception, almost destroyed Goldberg’s career. (Indeed, following the furore the film engendered, critics such as Bogle began to talk about her in the past tense.) The film’s portrayal of violent black men and long-suffering black women provoked an Oscar nomination (only three other black women – Hattie McDaniel, Dorothy Dandridge and Cicely Tyson – have received one) and a hailstorm of criticism, a disproportionate amount of which was directed at Goldberg personally. There were demonstrations outside cinemas at which the film was being shown, and a sanction was imposed by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), which declared that the film “misrepresented” black people.

And as if this were not bad enough, into the fray stepped Spike Lee, who called her a sell-out and dissed the way she looked. But though Goldberg’s remarks – “I want to be considered an actress not a black actress”; “I figure you look at me and you see I’m black, I don’t have to say it” – were hardly designed to win friends among political black people, and indeed still enrage today, she managed to sink her teeth firmly into Lee’s Achilles’ heel by asking “How many black women who look like me do you see in Spike’s films?” Many applauded – Spike’s bevy of brown babes and depiction of women in general have not made him popular with black women in the US. In fact, it is a criticism levelled at most of the new wave of black directors, who have done little to broaden the range of roles for black female actors, even as they have given a whole generation of black men – Denzel Washington, Wesley Snipes, even rap star Ice T – a grab-bag of new dramatic roles.

The battleground for *The Color Purple* may have seemed to be about politics, but in fact it

RONALD GRANT



was about class. And much of it was fought out on the symbolic landscape of Ms Goldberg's clothes and appearance. The sartorial has been one of the few mechanisms for negotiating social hierarchies within black communities, so it is no surprise that the person who has appeared on the list of America's worst-dressed women more times than virtually any other actor should provoke her community's ire.

While many clearly felt that *The Color Purple* was a whitewash, the venom of the black media emerged fully only when Goldberg arrived at the Academy Awards dressed in trainers and yellow leggings. It was bad enough that in films such as *Jumpin' Jack Flash* and *Fatal Beauty* (1987), Goldberg – once described as looking like a “covergirl for Sharecropper's Monthly” – should allow herself to be outfitted like a cross between a \$10 Harlem hooker and a bag lady: all leopard-print shoes and sequined sunglasses. But to dress like that in public evoked a cringing embarrassment among sophisticated urban black America, which lamented not just her taste, but her lack of political commitment as well.

The curious thing is that in the street cred stakes (if street cred has anything to do with black authenticity), Whoopi beats Spike hands down. With his middle-class, college-educated background, Lee is more a child of the Cosbys than a child of the ghetto, whereas Goldberg is the second daughter of a single mother who was married and divorced before the age of 20, dropped out of high school because of a drug problem, and then spent almost a decade on welfare (\$223 a month) in California bringing up her daughters on her own. Of course, being

a welfare mother in San Francisco is a far cry from being one in Detroit or Dubuque, Iowa. In the thriving, striving alternative culture of San Francisco – a city in which everyone is chasing their own particular rainbow, is about to ‘become somebody’, ‘do something’, ‘climb out of that closet’ – to be on welfare is almost a career opportunity: at least for the drag artists, tattooists, film-makers and dreamers on the edge of the big time.

What emerged for Goldberg from these experiences was a stage act that eventually led to her much acclaimed one-woman Broadway show, *Whoopi Goldberg*, and to the attention of director Mike Nichols. What followed was a pair of stand-up films based on her character Fontaine, a drugged-out counter-culture hippy who finally kicks the habit in the early 80s and finds himself straight in the extremely bent world of Reagan's America. He is a treat: tough, slightly over-the-top, lost. Such comic characters are Goldberg's strength, and it is when she is allowed to develop this on film, as in *Ghost* or the glorious tampax routine in *The Player*, that her talent most clearly emerges.

At her best, Goldberg is the classic outsider. She appears entirely at home in the unorthodox social grouping of her television series *Bagdad Café*, in which she plays a non-malignant, female version of Jack Nicholson, but it is a side of her that has rarely been captured on film. It's a problem that Richard Pryor would recognise. Having established himself as the genius of razor-edge comedy, Pryor found movie executives clearly mystified about how to use him on celluloid. What resulted were films like *Silver Streak* (1976), and eventually a defunct film career. Removed from their very different constituencies, both Pryor and Goldberg became artists cinematically in search of an audience.

Nowhere has the removal of the Goldberg character from any meaningful context been more problematic than in the romantic arena. The same thing happened with Eddie Murphy in *Beverly Hills Cop*: you take the black star out of the black community to make him more palatable, but then who does he date? Studio fears that America couldn't cope with Whoopi in the arms of a white lover were borne out by *Fatal Beauty*, where love scenes between Goldberg and co-star Sam Elliot ended up on the cutting-room floor after objections from preview audiences. But even when Goldberg has been allowed half-hearted romantic brushes with white male co-stars, as in *Sister Act*, her outlandish appearance effectively de-sexes her,

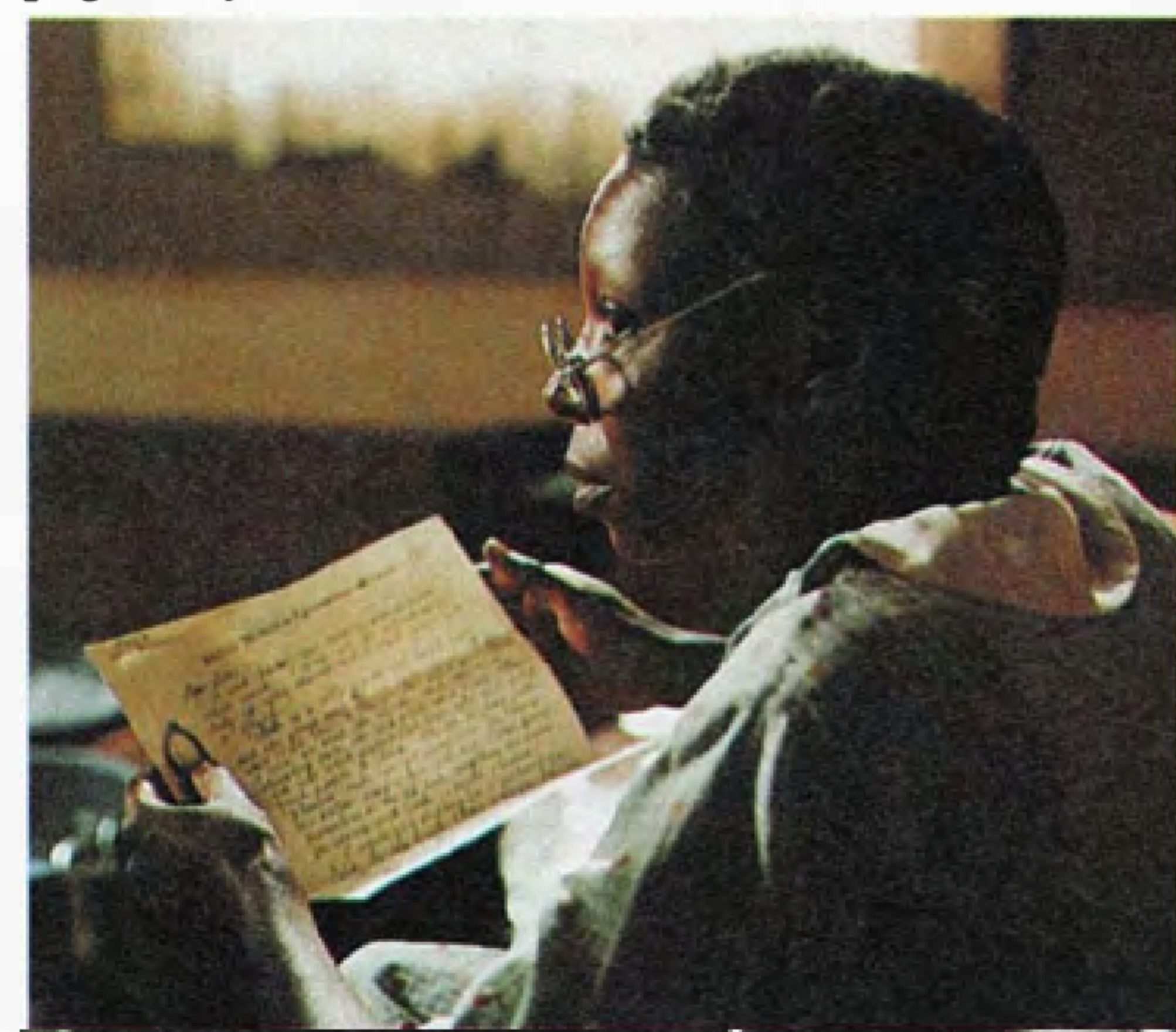
and a taboo activity like interracial love loses its charge.

In order to cross over, it seems that Goldberg has had to jettison the loaded sexual exoticism usually associated with the black female performer, as well as any potential political disruptiveness. Despite the promise of her early stage persona, in her film career, the apolitical mode has stuck. Her involvement in *Sarafina!* may well be an attempt to grasp some of the credibility that has eluded her, but even this is half-hearted, for despite some moving moments, *Sarafina!*, as a musical, has all the radical potential of *Yentl*.

Indeed, Goldberg's appeal, at least in film, lies perhaps in the fact that she is unthreatening, even relaxing. To many – black and white alike – her films are a delightful break from our society's endless negotiations on the subject of race, time out, from which we can return refreshed for the next round. And perhaps, therefore, Goldberg is, in a strange way, a hope for the future: a black performer whose black skin is an empty sign, like that of her white counterparts, that simply spells entertainment and does not carry with it the baggage of oppression or history.

But here in the present, many black people ask, “How can you trust a woman who wears weave-on locks?”, and it sometimes seems that Goldberg has found an audience only to lose her racial identity. But perhaps what Goldberg represents is the struggle between the popular and the populist. In contrast with the urbane and urban Spike Lee, she shares and reflects the mentality of shopping-mall America, whose black citizens, like its white, are not politicised or well dressed, and whose only desire is to get on and get out, any which way they can.

'Sarafina!' opened on 15 January and is reviewed on page 56 of this issue



Women on the edge:
brown beauty Dorothy
Dandridge, precursor of
Robin Givens et al, top;
Hattie McDaniel,
goodhearted ‘mother’ of
Miss Scarlett in ‘Gone with
the Wind’, left; Goldberg
in ‘The Color Purple’, above





Leni Riefenstahl protests her lack of interest in politics in her new autobiography. Yet there is a real connection between her love of nature and the body and fascist aesthetics.

By Thomas Elsaesser

PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG WOMAN

● Leni Riefenstahl at 90: photographed by Helmut Newton in a pair of rainbow-coloured leggings, stiletto heels, a fur-trim coat, leaning against a sports car parked on a gravelled driveway. The clash of associations, the campy bad taste, the sheer improbability of this apparition (fronting an interview with Riefenstahl in *Vanity Fair*, September 1992) is suitably disconcerting. Is this nonagenarian *femme fatale* still worshipping at the fountain of youth, or is this a pose to make her part as the fluttering butterfly of the Third Reich more credible? Either way, the butterfly Riefenstahl is clearly made of steel: a specimen from a period that does not seem to diminish in scale as it recedes in time. For this incommensurability alone, the autobiography of the director of *Triumph of the Will* (1935) and *Olympia* (1938) – two films that have come, rightly or wrongly, to epitomise Nazi narcissism – merits attention, even without the tediously irrelevant but apparently still lucrative frisson of how intimate she has been with the Führer.

From someone who has always professed her ignorance of the concentration camps, or of Gestapo terror acts, the title of *The Sieve of Time* is, to say the least, an odd choice. Self-critical irony or haughty defiance? The phrase seems to have been inspired by a line from Albert Einstein: “one must take comfort in the fact that time has a sieve, through which most trivia run off into the sea of oblivion”. If media interest in Riefenstahl’s autobiography has focused on her personal ties with Nazi leaders, the book seems to have been written partly to redress the balance, to give more space to her life after 1945 (the Nazi era takes up less than 200 pages), and to record her formative period in the 20s, as a dancer, briefly with Max Reinhardt, then as a movie star in Arnold Fanck’s *The Holy Mountain* (1927) and her own *The Blue Light* (1932).

Riefenstahl is the first to admit that she is no great writer; but she has an acute mind, and always knew how to capitalise on her considerable charm. The films, on the other hand, have always been controversial. And a number of key points emerge from the decades of debate:

– In Riefenstahl’s work we can see the continuity of Weimar cinema (especially Fritz Lang) with Nazi cinema. This thesis is based on the similarity of certain recurrent visual motifs (wild landscapes, dramatic skies, heroic bodies), shared genres such as the mountain film, to which Riefenstahl contributed as actor and

director, and finally, a monumentalism which Siegfried Kracauer, apropos of *The Nibelungen* and *Metropolis*, has identified as the “mass ornament”: a dehumanising, quasi-military, strictly hierarchical and patterned representation of crowds (originally borrowed, as Lotte Eisner has shown, by Lubitsch, Lang and others from Reinhardt’s theatre spectacles of the 1910s).

– Riefenstahl is responsible for two masterpieces, which, while politically abhorrent or at any rate highly suspect, nonetheless continue to be aesthetically impressive, indeed brilliant textbook examples of how to make a stirring film out of a tedious event (a political party conference), and how to create a four-hour narrative of drama, human interest and suspense out of a two-week sports meeting.

– The reason we keep coming back to these films (and to their director) is because they have become prototypes of genres which to this day are central, if not to the cinema, then to the aesthetics of television. The coverage of presidential elections, political summits, the staging of the Olympic Games can all be traced back to Riefenstahl’s invention of the ‘photo-opportunity’ which is *Triumph of the Will*. More critically, Riefenstahl’s films are associated with the Nazi recognition that reality is an event which happens in order to be filmed.

– Taking these points together, it can be shown that Riefenstahl’s career as an actor in the mountain films, as a film-maker of political documentaries, and as a photographer of vanishing African tribes is all of a piece, illustrating some of the quintessential features of fascist aesthetics and its visual imagination. This imagination continues to be fascinating to this day, because the kind of image-making it implies – which not only shows an abiding tendency to abstract the human figure and body from its historical and social inscription, but treats it as an empty sign or icon – means that the human figure can serve as a support for any kind of message, propaganda or advertising, all of which instrumentalise the body.

If this, broadly speaking, is the received wisdom on Riefenstahl the film-maker, does the autobiography contain anything which might help us settle the ‘controversy’? The answer on the whole is: no. Riefenstahl once again defends herself vigorously against her critics, chronicling the innumerable law suits and libel cases she has fought since 1945, and citing testimonies, documents, affidavits in her favour. The most poignant case is perhaps that against Erwin Leiser’s *Deutschland Erwache!*, for using footage from *Triumph of the Will* as if it were documentary, and intercutting it with shots of concentration camps. Since her reputation rests on the skilful juxtaposition of material, and since to this day she adamantly insists on her film of the Nazi party rally being “a pure record of what happened”, her position is doubly ironic: a fact that entirely escapes her. The most politically damaging allegation she got the courts to clear her from was that she had used as extras in *Tiefland* (finally released in 1954) a family of gypsies she knew was destined for a death camp.

While none of this may cut much ice in Riefenstahl’s favour, more inadvertently and ►



Leni Riefenstahl in ‘Olympia’, opposite; ‘Triumph of the Will’, with its hymn to the spectacular Nazi order, above



A balancing act: 'Festival of Beauty', the second part of Riefenstahl's 1938 'Olympia', a hymn to her abiding love of the abstracted body

◀ only obliquely, *The Sieve of Time* does shed some light on what made her 'tick', and to this reader at least suggests some thoughts which imply a slightly different interpretation of her career. First, there is the importance of dance to her world view. From her earliest, father-defying passion for the Laban school of modern dance to her conception of herself as a self-expressive film-artist, a consistent line runs through her life which seems to focus on the body as total expressive fact. This needs to be seen historically. Not only was *Ausdruckstanz* something of an upper-middle-class craze in the 1910s and 20s (the Isadora Duncan phenomenon), but Riefenstahl also shared in its wider cultural significance as part of a German youth movement (the Wandervögel) which was progressive in inspiration, libertarian, and whose *Freikörperkultur* (free body culture) has to be seen in the context of Wilhelmine collars, corsets and covered piano legs. As was the case with so many other movements to do with the body and sport in the 20s, the Nazis were able to co-opt some of the dance movement's adherents during the 30s, until "self-discipline and ecstasy" (as one critic called it) became one of the central attractions of Nazi aesthetics.

It seems clear that Riefenstahl remained faithful to her early ideals in this respect, and not only as far as the outdoor life of skiing, hiking, swimming and diving is concerned. For instance, the autobiography leaves no doubt that she enjoyed sex, and liked talking about it – at a time when this was not fashionable. Not only did she have many affairs – with her cameraman, her fellow-actors, men she met almost anywhere and fancied – but film-making was evidently for her a very erotic and sexualised

activity. On the set of *The Holy Mountain*, for instance, she played off Fanck against star Luis Trenker, keenly aware of the older man's sexual torment when she favoured Trenker.

Another telling episode occurs in 1932, when Riefenstahl starred in Fanck's *S.O.S. Iceberg*, produced by Paul Kohner. A dual-language, German-American co-production (the American version was directed by Tay Garnett and produced by Carl Laemmle at Universal), it was shot in Greenland by a team made up of a film crew and a scientific expedition (the latter, one gathers was necessary in order to get permission to film among the Eskimos, whom the Danish government wanted to protect from disease). Sandwiched between her first meeting with Hitler at Wilhelmshaven and his visit to her Berlin studio to look at photographs (and disapprove of some Käthe Kollwitz charcoal drawings on her wall), the Greenland trip takes in an escaped polar bear, a switch of lovers (from Hans Scheeberger to Hans Ertl), and a rescue by Ernst Udet, the stunt pilot in Fanck's films, of one of the scientists, Dr Sorge, whose boat smashed when a huge iceberg began to 'calve'. There exists an account by Sorge himself (*Mit Flugzeug, Faltboot und Filmkamera in den Eisfjorden Grönlands*, Berlin 1933), which focuses on the research part of the expedition. Where Sorge mentions Riefenstahl, he complements her story, down to the details of her urinary problems and the fact that she not only kept a portrait of Hitler in a sealskin frame by her bed, but kept quoting – to jibes from the scientists – from her bedtime reading, Hitler's *Mein Kampf*.

What I think is significant about this episode is that Riefenstahl's pan-eroticism and nature worship was matched by a very down-to-

earth, 'modern' appreciation of her own sexuality, which had little of the repressive, prudish atmosphere that surrounded Hitler. But it also tells something about the film-making milieu to which she belonged. It was Fanck, himself a curious mixture of the arctic explorer-scientist and autodidact film-technology freak, who taught Riefenstahl film-directing. The glimpses one gets of the milieu of mountaineering and movie-making are as intriguing as they are brief: Fanck, an independent producer, funded by UFA's American rival, Universal, with a crew partly on loan from UFA's prestigious but maverick Kulturfilm production unit, and made up partly of Fanck's First World War airforce cronies, with the troublesome Luis Trenker itching to make his own films; and Riefenstahl taking a rowing boat to sunbathe on an iceberg with one of the cameramen.

A camerawoman's film

Fanck was at heart a still photographer, forever experimenting with different lenses, exposure times and developing baths. Influenced by the Renger-Patsch tradition of the New Realism, he wanted to bring to his movies of mountain, ice and snow the textures and tonalities of the photographic print: using slow motion, backlighting, contrasts in scale and strong separation of background and foreground. None of this was lost on Riefenstahl when she came to shoot *Triumph of the Will*, and it may have some bearing on the argument of how 'inept' it is as a piece of film-making. Rather, I would argue that it strikes one as a camera(wo)man's film, introducing a certain photographic aesthetic into the hitherto shunned areas of crowds, power and politics. If *Triumph of the Will* is the

triumph of form over substance, this is partly because it is a box of photographer's tricks, blended with point-of-view editing techniques picked from feature film-makers, squirrelled away like a film-school graduate, and then flamboyantly, impetuously shown off on a commission (affidavits to the contrary notwithstanding) she could not refuse. It is this 'experimental' dimension which to this day makes some documentary film-makers her most ardent fans, professing to have 'learnt from her'. But these film-makers also know that when helping themselves from *Triumph of the Will*, a little goes a long way, for part of the potency of the film is that, in its genre, it goes too far – but on a road television documentary has often travelled since.

Fanck also put Riefenstahl in touch with Harry Sokal, the Jewish producer who backed her financially and logistically for *The Blue Light*, giving her the opportunity to found her own production company, a fact which was very important to her not only after 1945, when she argued in her defence that neither *Triumph of the Will* nor *Olympia* were 'official' Nazi films, commissioned and financed by the party.

The salient question, in a way, is not the extent to which *Triumph of the Will* has or has not influenced documentary film-makers (there are tributes not only from Grierson but also from Paul Rotha), but what kind of causal link – and therefore responsibility – can be established from this film to the Nazi newsreel tradition, and the countless documentaries and propaganda films made in the 30s and 40s. From a film-historical point of view, the malleability of the material through editing is less remarkable than the contribution made to the editing by the sound montage and Herbert Windt's score, sound obviously being the technology in which to be experimental in the 30s. It is here that Riefenstahl did something original: putting staged tableaux to movement, music and vocals. Hence the point Riefenstahl expends many pages refuting – that there was re-staging and re-shooting on *Triumph of the Will*, as mentioned in Albert Speer's *Inside the Third Reich* – is something of a red herring. Speer, who acknowledges the difficulties Riefenstahl had, as an independent-minded woman, with the party hierarchy, confesses, somewhat disingenuously, to being shocked when Streicher, Rosenberg and Frank agree to re-takes in the studio. Hess, "with his special brand of ardour, turned precisely to the spot where Hitler would have been sitting, snapped to attention and cried: 'Mein Führer, I welcome you in the name of the Party Congress'. He did it all so convincingly that from that point on I was no longer sure of the genuineness of his feelings". Riefenstahl herself mentions the many re-shoots necessary for *Olympia*, mainly in connection with the stormy love affair she had with the American decathlon winner, Glenn Morris, which apparently made her miss some crucial heats in the competition.

Since *Triumph of the Will* and *Olympia* have to this day remained, for an international public at least, the best-known films the Nazi cinema produced, the fact that Riefenstahl directed both of them weighs against her when she

protests her lack of interest in politics or propaganda. However, from a film-historical perspective, the films may not belong together as logically as is usually asserted. *Olympia* is stylistically quite different from *Triumph of the Will*. Yet even if one emphasises stylistic similarities (low-angle shots of erect bodies against an empty sky, and so on) there remain substantial differences in terms of function. While *Triumph of the Will* was made mainly in order to bind the leaderless SA to the Party, after the Röhm putsch and the 'night of the long knives', *Olympia* was a compromise project, negotiated between the regime and the Olympic Committee, which aimed to give to the world an image of the games as supra-individual and supra-national, a celebration of youth in communal competition. That these representations are carefully 'constructed' is evident, but this in itself hardly differs from the construction of the nation on the nine-o'clock news. What is more indicative is the use the games, and Riefenstahl's film-making, seem to have been put to – namely to front another enterprise altogether, that of allowing the Nazis their first experiments with television, and the live transmission of events. The new technology and its potential preoccupied the various ministries involved much more than the ideological content of *Olympia*.

Two issues come into play here – one is that the Nazis, while keeping a tight rein on film production, did not consider film to be their main propaganda medium. As far as the audiovisual media were concerned, it was radio that interested them, and its penetration into the home and potential as a public address and alarm system were as significant as what was broadcast. During the war, simultaneous broadcasting and the emphasis on 'live-ness' became a crucial part of the morale-boosting, mass-mobilising function of the media. For these objectives, film was too slow a medium. One might even argue that the Nazi film industry was developed as an entertainment industry, for the films and stars acted as induce-

ments to bring spectators to the newsreels. None of the technological or media-political considerations seems to have occurred to Riefenstahl: the memoirs make no mention of the presence of television cameras at the games.

Eroticised relationships

There is perhaps a more important reason why it did not strike her. The way the cinema developed in Germany was not at all in the direction of Riefenstahl's own idea of cinema. In the 30s and 40s, UFA, Terra and Tobis – the three major production companies – were run by and large as studios churning out films designed to make money. While they were broadly in line with the regime, they continued a genre cinema already well established in the 20s whose mainstays were melodramas and comedies, musicals and bio-pics – genres whose formulas were often copied directly from Warner Bros or MGM prototypes. Where politics massively operated in the Nazi cinema was in the realm of personnel politics (the compliance of UFA in Hitler's racial policy is well documented) and in the style and content of the newsreel.

Not only was Riefenstahl an 'independent' producer/film-maker in a film business increasingly centralised and industrialised, but – as already indicated – hers was in inspiration an art and experimental cinema. While her films, as well as Fanck's, were released through UFA, UFA was not their production company: on the contrary, Fanck refers to himself as the "Freiburg School", and had little but contempt for studio-bound film-making as practised in Neu-Babelsberg or Munich. Riefenstahl was less radical, but she too was committed to the outdoor view of cinema. Riefenstahl's aversion to being identified with propaganda, newsreel and commissioned films has, it seems to me, more to do with her self-image as a film-artist than with any attempt at political whitewash.

The question the memoirs prompt, then, when viewed from the point of view of film industry and film politics, is how did Riefenstahl fit into the Nazi cinema, as opposed to ►



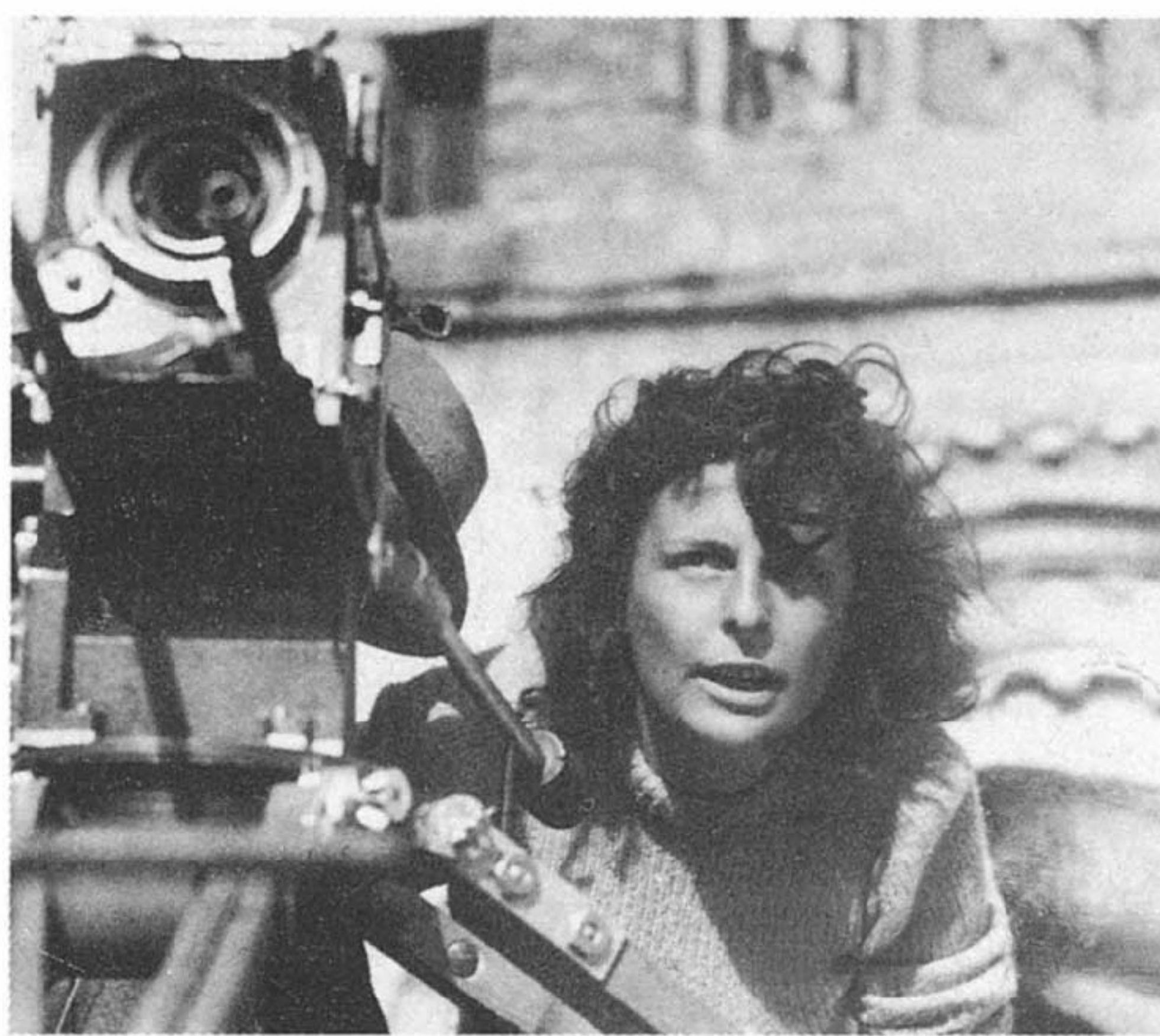
Lost horizon: the post-war film 'Tiefeland', whose utopian pastoralism belies the frustrations involved in its making

◀ echoing motifs or tendencies of other Nazi films? The answer seems to be, not very well. For one of the puzzling aspects of her career is why she made only these two films, if she was so important to the regime. The one other film she worked on throughout the 30s and 40s was *Tiefland*, and what she documents about this project is a tale of failures and disappointments, of outright official betrayal.

It is here that Riefenstahl's paranoia is most noticeable. Perhaps in order to explain to herself the lack of support she received as a filmmaker, she builds up Goebbels as her arch foe, though whether this tortured and highly eroticised relationship explains anything about her film-making career is less clear. It does demonstrate the fact that Riefenstahl was not very adept either tactically or analytically, revealing once again her tendency to personalise and sexualise whatever happened to her. In fact, Goebbels brings out the melodramatist and pulp novelist in her: "He said, looking round the dark, deserted street: 'We can't stay here, you'll be drenched'. I glanced at my small Mercedes parked in front of the building... There was only one thing on my mind: nobody must see us... As we turned into the forest I saw him produce a gun from his raincoat pocket and thrust it into the glove compartment. Noticing my alarm, he smiled. 'I never go anywhere without a weapon'... He grabbed my breast and tried to force himself on me. I had to wrestle my way out of his arms... Besides himself with rage, he held me against the wall and tried to kiss me. His eyes were wide open, and his face completely distorted".

Cult of the body beautiful

To be fair, Riefenstahl knew there was a thin line between being the Führer's favourite filmmaker and ending in disgrace, so there may have been a grain of truth in the paranoia, a sense of real terror, when trying to dodge not only Goebbels' grasping hands, but film commissions from the Party. Riefenstahl knew that these things could go horribly wrong, as they did in the case of her friend and cameraman, Willy Zielke. Zielke was commissioned by the Reichsbahn to make a film celebrating the German railway's centenary, giving the story of the inventors and developments from the steam engine to the diesel locomotive. In *The Steel Animal*, "Zielke had turned this difficult material into a thrilling picture. His locomotive looked like a living monster. The headlights were its eyes, the instruments its brain, the piston its joints, and the oil dripping from the moving pistons looked like blood... When the officials saw the movie, they were so horrified – according to Zielke – that they left the room speechless". The film was not only not shown, the railway board had the prints destroyed. Riefenstahl tried to intercede, and arranged for Goebbels to see a print. He thought it showed talent, but found it too abstract for the public: "It could be a Bolshevik film". "But that's no reason to destroy the film", replied Riefenstahl. "I'm sorry, but the decision is entirely up to the Reichsbahn, which has financed the film". More than the film was destroyed: Zielke's sanity suffered, and he was interned in a men-



Looking for direction: Riefenstahl on location for 'Tiefland'

tal hospital, apparently blaming Riefenstahl for his committal.

Beyond the human element, the episode also shows that there were a number of non-fiction film-makers who tried to continue the more experimental and formal film-making of the 20s, like Walter Ruttmann's, influenced by Eisenstein and Russian film – an art cinema, in other words, with which Riefenstahl had a great affinity. With the beginning of the war, and the gearing of the industry into a more overt propaganda and morale-boosting machine, directors like Riefenstahl saw their opportunities for making films dwindle, and Riefenstahl herself became more and more marginalised compared to directors who, like top managers or the captains of industry, put themselves in the service of the regime. Directors like Veit Harlan and Wolfgang Liebeneiner, Karl Ritter, Gustav Ucicky and Josef von Baky fitted this industrial strategy completely, and had the same cynical attitude to keeping production going at any price (as with Harlan's *Kolberg*) as Speer had in the armament industries. It may be Riefenstahl's vague knowledge of this that made her so sensitive about the accusation of using gypsies from the concentration camp, for while the use of forced labour might have been possible for a major production, it adds insult to injury where the mostly aborted *Tiefland* project was concerned. However, she never seemed to realise that her cult of the body beautiful had become a blasphemy in a Germany where bodies were labour power to be worked to death in munitions factories or rocket test sites; this in turn made her incapable of seeing those who could not forgive her as anything other than personal enemies, motivated by spite and "human nastiness".

Although it would be plainly absurd to suggest that Riefenstahl was a pawn of the Nazi regime, there is a sense in which she had little control over what became of her career, which was effectively finished before the outbreak of the war. The memoirs both know this and disavow this knowledge. How, then, can one understand Riefenstahl's "I only live for what is beautiful" other than as the desperate plea of someone who could never see herself in relation to any kind of history, or in any kind of social or political context, and who was therefore incapable of humour, wit or irony, but also incapable of recognition, reflection, remorse? The world view that inspired all her actions is certainly older than Nazism and goes deeper:

the contrasts between nature and civilisation, between the simplicity of physical strength and the complications of social existence. Even the basic untruth of her position, namely that in order to glorify and romanticise unspoilt nature and simplicity, she had to deploy all the technological acquisition of civilisation, as well as participate in a state apparatus of Byzantine deviousness, is not of itself what makes her a Nazi: to that extent, Riefenstahl may have been a fellow-traveller and a beneficiary, but nothing like as brazenly as many a Party-member (which she was not) officially rehabilitated during the 50s and allowed to enjoy top positions in West German government, industry and the judiciary. Having survived so long would appear to have been a mixed blessing for her, since it traps her into perpetually having to downplay the brief period in her long life which alone still makes her news; yet the lime-light also blocks her life from being looked at more kindly or more dispassionately. It is because she is still around that fingers will be pointed at her and, in turn, fans or ardent admirers will step into the breach.

Tragic dimension

Does it mean there is necessarily a tragic dimension to Riefenstahl's life? Perhaps not, but there are nonetheless ironies that make one pause, for she seems to have borne the brunt of public shame more openly and more frequently than the real culprits of the regime, most of whom, as far as film-making goes, were quite happily reintegrated into the industry. After 1945, the vast majority of them found work, even Veit Harlan, whose *Kolberg* and *Jud Süß* did not even split opinion between admirers and detractors the way Riefenstahl's films had always done. No, it was not the exposed nature of her films that put paid to her film-making career, but the fact that she was not 'one of us', that she had never really belonged in the first place. She was, it seems, as much an outsider to the film industry during the Third Reich as she was to be in the Federal Republic.

It is doubtful whether Riefenstahl fully understood even the film-historical side of the history in which she briefly played such a prominent part, for the memoirs give no clue to it. Yet it is difficult to take such a balanced view of Riefenstahl's memoirs or too charitable a view of her historical role. Compared to the aristocratic unrepentance displayed by another *vieille dame indigne* from Hitler's entourage, in Syberberg's *Confessions of Winifred Wagner*, the irritation provoked by *The Sieve of Time* comes less from Riefenstahl's apolitical aestheticism than from her sympathy-seeking. Shocked by the Holocaust as she now seems, and no doubt also aware of some dimensions of this story she does not touch on, she constantly buttonholes the reader, as if to absolve herself from a knowledge for which there could be no forgiveness, while evidently preferring the verdict of irredeemable naivety to that of culpable ignorance. Film history may not be able to help her out of this impasse, even where it can recognise that such an impasse exists.

'The Sieve of Time', by Leni Riefenstahl, is published by Quartet Books, £30

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THE GAMBLER

From 'The Driller Killer' and 'Ms .45' to 'Bad Lieutenant', Abel Ferrara's low-budget, hardboiled, and brutal films have looked for trouble. He talks here with Gavin Smith



● For a dozen years now, New York-based director Abel Ferrara, usually teamed with screenwriter Nicholas St. John, has survived on the edge of the mainstream movie business, half-aided, half-held back by his cult reputation as a maverick. No question his movies look for trouble: *The Driller Killer* (1979) was the original video nasty, though it has no such notoriety stateside; long before *Thelma & Louise*, with its *Repulsion* meets *Death Wish* gun-play, *Ms .45* (1980) was a potent feminist thriller that won its director a critical following. Ferrara's directorial attitude has always been in-your-face, unflinchingly brutal yet increasingly stylish, making his points with growing technical skill. Crucially, between the gritty urban psycho-on-the-loose thriller *Fear City* (1984) and the stylish, assured update of *Romeo and Juliet*, *China Girl* (1987), Ferrara directed two episodes of *Miami Vice*, as well as the high-gloss, streamlined television pilot for Michael Mann's *Crime Story* series, sealing his reputation as a can-do action director with style to spare. And then, after the false start of *Cat Chaser* (1989), which was re-cut by the producers, came *King of New York* (1990), which combined state-of-the-art sleaze, over-the-top violence and a political critique of Reaganism with exquisitely arty visuals. Ferrara seemed poised to go mainstream if he wanted – but instead side-stepped into his greatest film yet, *Bad Lieutenant* (1992), a relentlessly bleak character study of a lost soul's spiritual degradation in contemporary New York City. An ultra-low-budget film made in hit-and-run style in 20 days, it is to Ferrara what another masterpiece, *Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia*, was to Sam Peckinpah, in precisely the same hardboiled tradition of personal/artistic/spiritual statement. Ferrara has since completed *The Bodysnatchers* (1992), which reworks the *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* scenario and relocates it to an army base in the South. And right now he's shooting *Snake Eyes*, again teamed with Nicholas St. John, a Hollywood love-obsession triangle with Harvey Keitel as a film director and Madonna and James Russo as stars in a *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* meets *The Player* storyline.

Gavin Smith: Given that this is a character study, why do we get no sense of the *Bad Lieutenant's* past, how he has got to the state he's in?

Abel Ferrara: I don't think the past necessarily tells you why somebody is the way they are – I'm more concerned with the future than with the past. Who cares? That's the way he woke up that morning.

But the pain he's in comes from somewhere.

It comes from his heart. I think pain is in one way or another in everyone.

Is the character based on yourself at all?

I hope so.

But you don't gamble?

No. Or very very rarely. But I've been around a lot of heavy, degenerate gamblers, so I can see what it does to people. It's a lifestyle. People killing each other over games. There's more passion at a Wembley soccer match than in St Patrick's Cathedral. Why? People are betting

their entire lives, the future of their families, on 22 people on a field, and they don't know any of them. What would make someone behave like that?

The film was based on a song I wrote called 'The Bad Lieutenant' which has lines that go, "I push through the crowd because I'm the man in charge/Drinking my coffee, I'm talking with the sergeant". I think the common aspect is that we're both the men in charge, me from the directorial point of view. The Lieutenant's job is to tell other people what to do. Everybody missed the point and said he didn't do any police work, but lieutenants don't do police work. The rank of lieutenant is not just handed out to anybody; there are very few of them and they aren't supervised, they're running the show. What he does is to go to the crime scene, check it out, make sure everybody's working and think about what's happening.

How did you get from the song to the script?

In 1982 a nun got raped in Spanish Harlem. All kinds of rewards were laid out, everybody was up in arms, and though I was outraged too, later I started thinking. What about the other ten women who got raped that day? How come no one's putting out rewards for them? Bo Dietel, the cop who busted the guys that raped the nun, is in the movie; he plays the cop with the beard. Here's the song: "I was born in the Bronx but raised on the street/Where they pack their badge and their dope right next to their heat/I got a wife and five kids and a house by the park/And a model in heat that I keep in the dark/'Cause I'm the Bad Lieutenant.

"They call me up when the shit goes down/There's blood on a dress, there's a gun on the ground/I push through the crowd 'cause I'm the man in charge/Drinking my coffee, I'm talking with the sergeant/'Cause I'm the Bad Lieutenant.

"Up on Martin Luther King is where the shit gets copped/But it was 153rd where Willie got dropped/I pull up in my car, I'm a civilian to some/But the brothers know that the Man has come/I slip a \$100 bill to my girl Kenny McCoy/To tell me Willie got popped by one of his boys/But the bag in the back's about a key and a half/I said 'I'll put it in my trunk' and we started to laugh/'Cause I'm the Bad Lieutenant.

"A nun got raped behind Angel Dust and rum/And in Spanish Harlem that's the ultimate bummer/The cops pissed, pulled them out of their slumber/If you want them perps you better take a number/But my boy walks to a different drummer/He says, 'if the bitch ain't dead, just fuck her'".

That's basically what I had. And a cheque for \$40,000 from Ed Pressman. What possessed him to give me that money, I don't know. Nicky St. John didn't want to write it for reasons of his own. So Zoë Lund, star of *Ms .45*, came in, we worked together. She wrote it very quickly, at least the first draft – and we needed a draft in two weeks.

What ideas did you bring to 'Bad Lieutenant' in terms of visual style?

I don't bring anything to a picture before we start. We have the story and we have the players and what the film ends up looking like comes together during its making. I knew we had to

shoot it fast for financial reasons, we had a certain kind of crew, it was shot by Kenny Kelsch, who shot *The Driller Killer*, and so we tried to keep the camera movement functional. I have my own aesthetic judgment but...

So how do you define the director's role in the film-making process?

The director's specific job is to understand what shots he needs to tell the story and what the company as a whole and every individual member of the company is capable of doing. And he's got to take it to another level, to keep raising his own abilities and expectations.

And what is the director's role in defining the film's style?

He's part of it. Hiring the crew is the biggest thing. These are home movies in a way – it's not a bunch of strangers out there doing this.

Where does your visual sense come from?

God-given.

Is it instinctive?

God-given.

You believe in God, Abel?

Yup.

Are you religious?

No. I don't know what that word means, in relation to me. I believe in God.

One of the film's visual characteristics is the way certain images echo others – particularly the shot of the Lieutenant driving the two rapists to the bus station which echoes the first scene of him driving his kids to school.

At that point those kids are his kids, once he made the commitment that makes him understand that these aren't a couple of fucking spics to waste and get \$50,000 – we're all God's children. They became his children and then he came to some kind of realisation.

What about the shot of a naked, stoned Keitel crying, arms outstretched – was that intended to foreshadow the Christ imagery?

We almost didn't use it because of that, but then again, who knows what he was doing – that's not something you plan out. You're not rehearsing that with the camera. That shot was a nine- or ten-minute piece, and we used only a little bit of it. It's an obviously Christ-like pose, but I didn't see it so much like that because I knew what he had to do to get to that point, so I was seeing it as something else.

What went into shooting that scene?

I just gave him his space, gave him his time. My shooting isn't separate from what he's doing – in other words, he does what he does and we film it. I don't come with some preconceived notion – how we work is organic. You work around the way he works. He's in every shot, usually alone, so that becomes part of the style of the movie.

There's a lot more improvisation in 'Bad Lieutenant' than in your other films.

Improvisation is a funny concept because the basis of any great improvisation is great material, a great script, to begin with. And then it's very hard to say where it starts and stops. These scenes have been discussed and worked on and written together, so who knows where that improv begins or where there are real lines? Sometimes I'll say, it's a great improv, and then I realise that Zoë wrote that line. But every scene is in some sense an improvisation, ►

◀ because even if you use the same words, the moment is constantly happening.

How did you shoot the last shot of the film?

We just staged the event. Hid the camera in a van, had it take place at rush hour, and waited to see what would happen. We had a few extras in there and I was standing saying to passers-by, "Hey man, somebody just got shot in that car across the street". Then you'd see them walk into the frame.

Why was the nun's rape scene shot in a different style from the rest of the movie?

Because Harvey's not in it. But in any case, how do you film the rape of a nun, an event that really happened? If it wasn't you getting raped, it's unreal. On one level, what the Lieutenant says is true – "Just because she's in a penguin suit, I'm supposed to get bent out of shape?" The line from the song is "If the bitch ain't dead, just fuck her". And this is a guy who has daughters. "A nun got raped" – what is it about that sentence that means everyone remembers the event?

Is this interest in confronting the audience with things that are considered unspeakable linked to your use of the Schooly-D song 'Signifying Rapper', which is a catalogue of obscenities?

I think it's a great song, and there's something about the way it's recorded that felt right for the film. There's something very simple and very pure about it. It's just the story of a neighbourhood bully.

What was the intention of the scene where Keitel molests the two girls in the car?

Well what does it come after? It comes after the scene where he's seen a nun naked – and for a boy who grew up in a Catholic school, that's a wild thing to walk in on. It's like, how far down can a guy go? What does he do to get his rocks off? What does he need?

What point is made by portraying women, both here and in 'King of New York', as sexual objects and props?

That's what women are to those people. The *Bad Lieutenant* doesn't own Germaine Greer's body of work to study in his car between cases. But your presentation pointedly withholds that point of view.

Yes. I'm not going to make a value judgment about anybody. I don't think that's the role of the film-maker.

How far as a film-maker are you prepared to go to make something real?

It's up to the actors, it's up to the camera people – but how far in what direction?

The heroin scene.

Well, they put needles in their arms, it ain't the *Drugstore Cowboy* routine, these guys are shooting it up. But they're not doing drugs.

Why opt for real needles? Can the audience tell the difference?

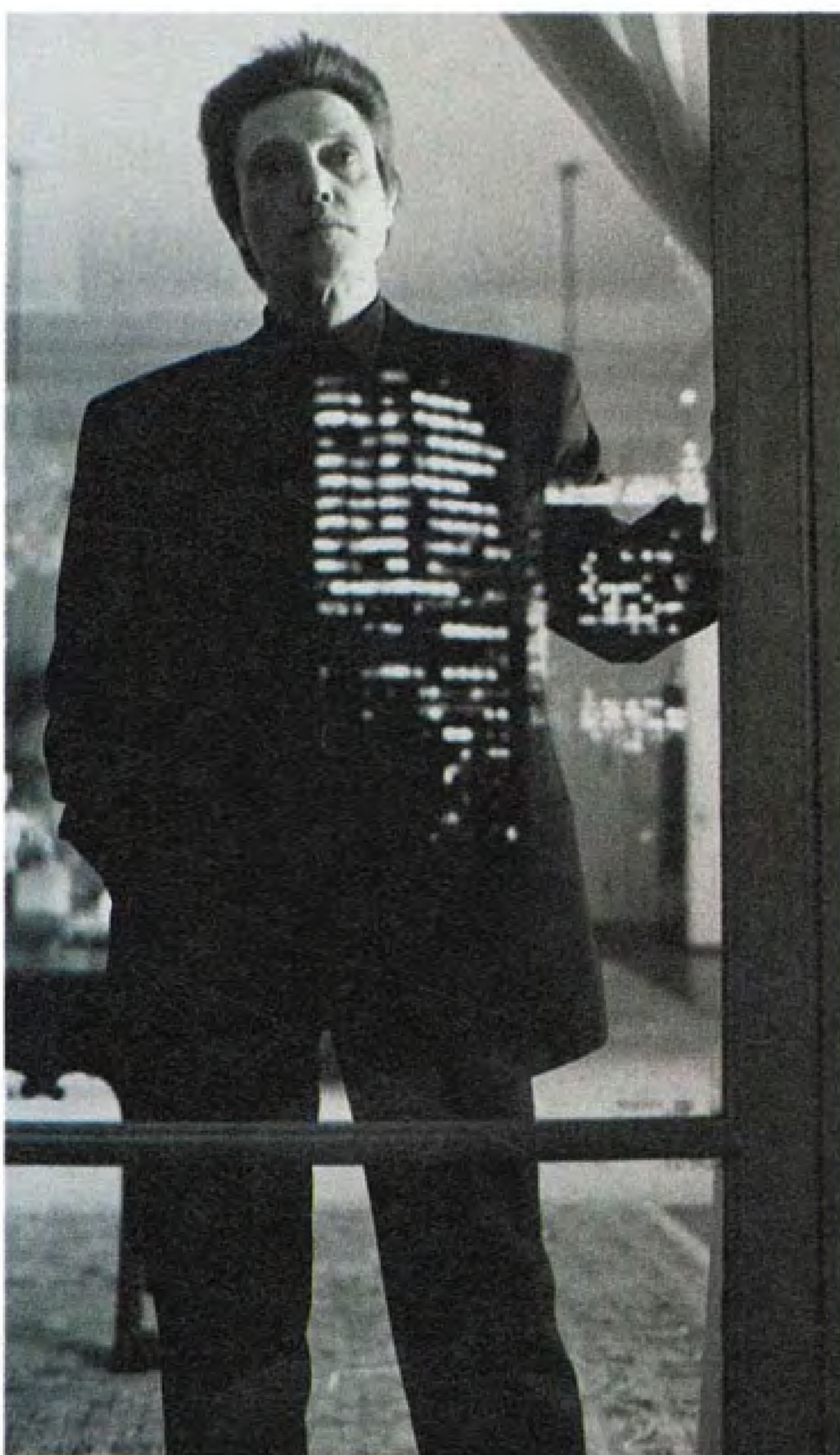
They definitely can. The act of putting a needle in your arm is like a rape, a self-rape – so I think you have to show it.

There are two ways of reading 'Ms .45': one is that it's about a person who gets carried away by violence...

She's getting into the power of the gun, yes.

The other, more radical reading is that when she starts to kill non-threatening men, the film almost implicates all men in the oppression of women.

That's a very simplistic way of looking at the



Blind ambition: is Christopher Walken the 'King of New York'?

movie. The dog deserved to die because it barked?

There's a big difference between the look of 'Ms .45' or 'Fear City', where you rely more on cutting than on camera moves, and 'King of New York' or 'China Girl', with their more lyrical camera movement.

The style of the first two is Jimmy Lemmo's camera, whereas the last two are Bojan Bazelli's. It was a different era back in the early 80s, a different style of film. Today it's more about keeping the take going. Bojan has a more classical approach to cutting and coverage, as opposed to letting it happen. It all comes from economics, as Godard says – the economics of a film are the politics of a film. On *China Girl*, Bojan was deep into the shadow trip – in other words, if you can afford one extra, you see his shadow, now you have two. Then on *King of New York*, Bojan had a certain take on how he wanted to shoot New York, which for him is a foreign place. Had I wanted to go in another direction, he wouldn't have shot the film.

Did you set out to film Chris Walken and Victor Argo differently?

It was thought out, in a non-specific way. Two such different faces, two such strong auras... you're lighting the character. To me, the King of New York is not Walken, but Argo. That's my own private joke. When it comes down to it, when he's got Walken in his sights and he'll be the big hero, just the thought of an innocent person getting hit by a stray bullet prevents him from taking the first shot. He sacrifices his life for the hostage's life. That's a real hero.

How did you come up with the ending?

That came about on the spot. There were going to be different things that happened – cops and all kinds of wacky stuff – but then Walken said: it ends not with a bang, but a whimper.

It was the opposite of something like 'Scarface'.

He wasn't that kind of character, he let other people do his shooting for him. This guy wasn't going to pull off some kind of operatic stunt; he thought he was going to make it to the end and escape. He thought, there are 9 million people, I'll just slip through the cracks and be gone. *What gets him in the end isn't the cops, but the New York traffic.*

Yes, the environment, the city. Plus he got shot in the stomach, which doesn't help.

Going on to 'China Girl'...

That's my favourite movie. I like the people, I like the locations, I like the way Bojan shot it. *It's much more poetic than anything else you've done.* I like the idea of it – this feudal world, two neighbourhoods separated by one block. That almost does exist, and as much as it's a fable, it's also close to being a documentary. It sounds like a joke to say we were trying to stay close to the original material, but that aspect was in the original material too. Romeo and Juliet are having an affair, and meanwhile Genoa is being torn apart by the local hooligans. It's a funny combination: you're making a gang movie and suddenly you've got two 15-year-olds running off madly in love. It's not something I would have thought of myself, but it's a classic story. We might not have got it together as elegantly as he did, but...

Why was the scene where the Chinese gang member is stabbed in his apartment shot with such a wild, neon colour scheme? It really stands out from the look of the rest of the film.

Because it becomes a surreal event, like the rape scene in *Bad Lieutenant*. A 15-year-old kid is going to be assassinated in his own living room. It happens every day, but how could you imagine it? Just the thought of it is going to trigger all kinds of excess in your mind. That scene is a Nicky St. John special.

I'll tell you a great story about censorship. One night I'm watching TV, big sports event, Friday night, eight o'clock: you have every kid in town watching. Then the baseball game gets rained off, so they put on *China Girl*. So I'm watching this film and I'm getting a cheque for this, so I'm happy as a lark, I'm sitting there happy as can be. Then as the movie is going on, I'm thinking, Jesus how are they going to edit that scene? The scene comes up, the guy walks over to the sleeping kid, taps him on the shoulder, takes the knife and goes whoop!, right into him, with the sound. Then you cut to the guy fixing his cuff-links and the camera goes out the window. Now, who the fuck knows whose cut this was, but it was about 400 times more violent than what we had! We had it becoming Shakespearean/comedic – you put the knife in me, then all of a sudden, after a half hour and a lot of overacting, I pull the knife out of me and now I'm going to use the knife you tried to kill me with to kill you. All they had was whoop! and boom!. It was the most vicious, violent, mother-fucking scene imaginable.

Have you been around violence much?

A lot of personal violence, yes, more personal than physical. I tend to shy away from physical violence – I'm an artist, man, you know what I'm saying?

But if that's the case, how are you able to deal with violence with such conviction?



'The Bodysnatchers': Ferrara's version of the classic 'Invasion of the Bodysnatchers', where the antagonists are strangely passive

You've got to keep your eyes open. As a filmmaker I'm not coming from some philosophical place, I'm trying to reflect what I see, mixed with my own imagination. I live in downtown Manhattan, an urban American environment. People are killed there every day, and you want to be able to say, this is what it's like when someone gets shot.

Inner conflict and conflict between people come together in scenes of violence. I don't know what it is that makes people violent, that makes people want to hurt people, but I know that it's out there and I know it's inside me. And by expressing it and showing it, you're attempting to come to terms with it. I just can't deny it. You cannot turn your back on reality in any way, shape or form. You can't be bullied into thinking violence on screen promotes violence... How many people felt like blowing somebody's brains out and then went to see *Taxi Driver* and walked out of that theatre and felt the life spirit of the actors and film-makers and it was like an act of contrition for them? How many people are healed by seeing that? Violence is so much a metaphor; we're not making documentaries. I don't mean to sound like the Godard quotebook, but a gun going off in a movie is not a gun going off.

So what's the violence in 'King of New York' a metaphor for?

Blind ambition. One person's going to take over the drug trade in New York. How stupid is that? You can't take it at face value. When Walken says, "A nickel bag gets sold in a park, I want half", what does that mean about the guy? It's the attitude that builds skyscrapers.

Yet Frank White is a genuinely radical, contradictory figure – he forges a direct link between crime and social consciousness.

I wouldn't go that far. He's a homicidal maniac.

But the Robin Hood theme is an age-old story. Since the drug trade in New York is so huge, it's almost the answer to a lot of problems. Is legalising drugs the answer? Or is that going to set off another chain of bigger problems? It's not so much crack – one year it's PCP, then it's Angel Dust, there's always a new word, but what is it really? Lack of opportunity for a major class of people.

The film stresses extremes of wealth and poverty that most Americans seem oblivious to.

Anybody that rich is a hood in one way or another – I think. It's about the individual, what they do for someone else. Frank White is saying, I want this hospital in this neighbourhood, I feel for these people regardless of the fact I have 80 zillion dollars – I almost need 80 zillion dollars to do something. The problem has to be confronted with capital. And where's that capital going to derive from? The oppression of the lower class. It's almost a vicious circle in terms of helping people.

The reality is that the drug trade money ends up in Swiss bank accounts, not recycled into the economy.

If it's in Swiss bank accounts, it's not helping anybody – that's a criminal act. If the desire for a black Mercedes with tinted windows or expensive leather jackets is what the game is about, then it's a criminal act. But if it becomes about how do we help each other, how do we give opportunity to people who are born into this tough world, then it matters. Frank White is one individual who's saying, hey, I can make a difference.

From what I know, 'Birds of Prey', the film you've been trying to make for years, has a similar political subject.

That's something Nicky St. John wrote in 1979, which I've tried to get financed a few times, unsuccessfully. It's a film about revolution in

New York, present day, the shit hitting the fan. The United States is run by a corporation, and you're either working for the corporation or you're an enemy of the state. It's about those on the outside, who have jumped ship because they feel the morality of corporate America is not in the best interests of everybody. The film starts at the point where arms are being taken up against the corporation, and then it turns into – a war movie.

It sounds high budget.

We can't get any budget. It could be a big-budget movie – we could do a *Die Hard* number on it with a helicopter attacking the post office... and we could also do it for little – it's the idea that matters.

Do you ever get feedback from the underworld?

How did they feel about 'China Girl'?

It's a lot more complex than whether you get it right or not right – who cares? It's all about making money with these people, they don't give a fuck about the truth. When we were doing *China Girl* back in 1987, the biggest heroes of the baddest Chinese gangsters were Don Johnson and Rod Stewart. Now you figure that one out.

Do you know any cops personally?

I know some guys. On a day-to-day basis, we try to hang out with the other side of the law.

What do cops think of the way they are portrayed in your films?

These people think films are a get-off – who cares, it has nothing to do with real life. Films are a place to make money, just another racket. The cops I know are living real life, so what do they give a shit about movies?

What is your take on 'The Bodysnatchers'?

The greatest thing about that movie is the concept of it – that is, that the antagonists are passive. They're not eating you or shooting you, they're just saying, go to sleep and when you wake up, the world's going to be a better place. Plus it's from an enemy you can't even see, because it's yourself. If I had come up with that take myself, I probably would have dismissed it, except for the fact that I know it has affected a lot of people on a primal level over a long period of time. And the book is awesome, with an entirely different ending in which the aliens float off. The aliens' basic attitude is, hey you guys are such pricks we're leaving, we're offering you nirvana and you guys are so fucked up you can't even accept it, so we'll go somewhere where we're appreciated. This movie is like a \$20 million Warner Bros job and we had a lot more control in the editing room, but it's a bit of the *Cat Chaser* thing in that we were trying to stay true to the original material.

You once mentioned that you saw 'The Bodysnatchers' as being about Aids.

The parallel of Aids in the 90s is a much more frightening thought than communism in the 50s. Obviously it's a metaphor for something, unless you're going to take the thing as a documentary and say, the Martians are here. Not that that would have any effect on anybody in this town – I said to Harvey, "Imagine if the Martians are here". He said, "So what? I got my own problems".

'Bad Lieutenant' opens on 19 February and is reviewed on page 40 of this issue

Can the tensions between black African and Arab film-makers be resolved? By Manthia Diawara

WHOSE AFRICAN CINEMA IS IT ANYWAY?

● The Carthage film festival ('Journées Cinématographiques de Carthage') – probably the most important event in the calendar of African cinema – has been run by the Tunisian government since its inception in 1966, and has often fallen hostage to changing political and ideological agendas, with black African film-makers in particular complaining that the event has become increasingly slanted to the concerns of rich Arab countries and the problems of Palestine. So for the 1992 festival, Ahmed Baha Eddine Attia, *l'enfant terrible* of Tunisian cinema and perhaps the most inventive producer of independent film in Africa, was appointed as director – a choice which ensured a more professional approach to the festival management and introduced some surprising new directions.

Most of the films Attia has produced to date break with the traditional Arab and Maghreb-African themes of ideologies of development, authenticity of culture and Manichean aesthetics in favour of such subject matters as Arab women (without the veil) and their sexual pleasure (Ferid Boughedir's *Halfaouine* and Nouri Bouzid's *The Golden Horseshoes*, both 1988); homosexual desire and culture (Bouzid's *Man of Ashes*, 1986, and *Bezness*, 1992); and self-reflexive representations of the threat of Islamic fundamentalism. Attia's dream is to create in Tunisia a cinema open to all themes, no matter how controversial – a situation he believes can arise only if African cinema is controlled by professional directors, distributors and producers rather than by government officials. Meanwhile, his business acumen enables him to recoup at least 75 per cent of the cost of his films before production through sales to distributors and television companies.

Attia's role at Carthage is not an easy one. Not only does he have to pacify the many government employees who lost their jobs in the restructuring process, but he also has to ensure that the French – represented this year by the Minister of Francophony, Mme Tasca, the director of the Centre National du Cinéma, Dominique Vallon, and Frédéric Mitterand, nephew of the President, as well as several civil servants – do not feel displaced by the new Arab money from the Gulf. Then there is the

struggle to prevent the fundamentalists, who tend to wrap themselves in the national flag, from dominating events with criticism of the festival as not attentive enough to the concerns of the Arab world, while at the same time restoring the confidence of Africans south of the Sahara, who have felt increasingly marginalised. (It is no secret that at the Panafrican Film Festival in Ouagadougou, Boughedir's magnificent film *Halfaouine* was denied a prize in a message of rejection from black Africans to their Arab brothers and sisters.)

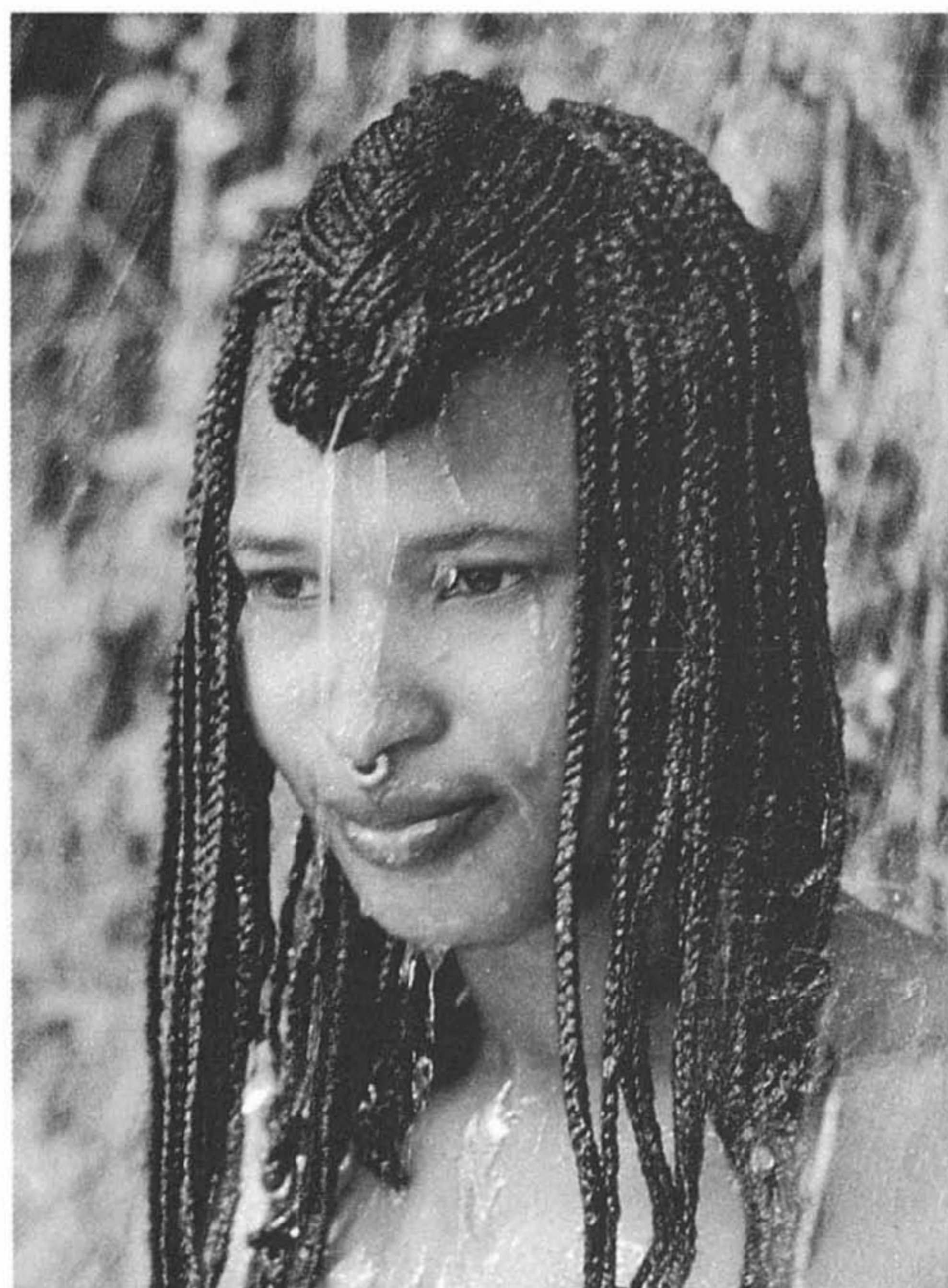
Yet despite the need for a degree of political manipulation, the first noticeable difference between Carthage '92 and the preceding festivals was in the free selection of the films in competition. In the past, as at Ouagadougou, both jury members and films have been chosen to satisfy political demands at the expense of cinematic excellence. This year, Attia's selection committee, headed by Boughedir, screened all the films beforehand and Attia was careful to exclude from the official competition his own film *Bezness*, to avoid the criticism of serving local interests that has dogged Ouagadougou and Carthage in the past. But problems

remained, in particular in the disproportionate size of the official French delegation in a festival that calls itself African and Arab.

The Tanit d'Or was awarded to *The Night* (Mohamed Malas, Syria), a film about the loss of Palestine to Israel. In this epic told from the point of view of the vanquished, the young male narrator reconstructs the spaces and city of his past, and his memories of his father and mother, in a fragmented, Proustian manner. With its self-conscious cinematography, with shots from rooftops and through peepholes, its slow pace, and its reflexive style, echoing the cinema of Visconti, Tarkovsky and the literary narratives of recent French film-makers, *The Night* was clearly the most challenging film in the festival. But its refusal to move beyond a fixed political discourse and involvement with Pan-Arab nationalism can make it tedious, in particular for black Africans, who understand the Palestinian people's fight for a homeland in terms of a liberation movement akin to the struggle in South Africa or the black peoples' struggle in the US, rather than as a religious battle. The complexity of *The Night* highlights the value of the simple style of films such as *The Beach of Lost Children* (Jilali Farhati, Morocco 1991), or populist Egyptian cinema such as *Against the Government* (Atef Taïeb).

The preoccupation of Arab film-makers with the Palestinian problem and with Islamic fundamentalism was not matched by a representation of contemporary ideologies in black African cinema, which seemed concerned again with the themes of tradition versus modernity (*Samba Traore* by Idrissa Ouedraogo; *Toubab Bi*, Senegal, by Moussa Touré; *Gito*, Burundi, by Léonce Ngabo) and of the public sphere in post-independence Africa (*Quartier Mozart*, Cameroon, by Jean-Pierre Bekolo; *The Blue Eyes of Yonta*, Guinea-Bissau, by Flora Gomes; *Un certain matin*, Burkina Faso, by Fanta Nacro). And there were formal differences, too, in that Arab films – *Proud Beggars*, Egypt, by Asma El Bakri; *Ecrans de sable*, Lebanon, by Randa Chahal Sabbag; *Automne*, Algeria, by Malik Lakhdar Hamina – favoured more reflexive narrative styles.

For example, Mahmoud Ben Mahmoud and Fadel Jaïbi's *Chichkhan* (Tunisia, 1991) is a mod-



Entering a dialogue: Souleymane Cissé's 'Yeelen'



Remembrance of things past: Ferid Boughedir's 'Halfaouine', a loving recreation of childhood

ern *film noir* about an aging man, Si Abbes, who gives an 'antique diamond' bracelet to a young woman, Kinza. But it turns out that the bracelet is not his to give and is wanted by a group of thugs which includes his illegitimate son and an old girlfriend from Italy. The film includes scenes of eroticised violence against older people, an old man's sexual attraction to a young girl, and a hybrid use of Italian, French and Arabic. *Chichkhan*'s sophisticated use of film language to signify the hybrid culture of Tunisia and to echo the *noir* style of contemporary European and American detective fiction differentiates it from black African film-making, which on the whole does not enter into conversation with western cinema (exceptions include *Un certain matin*, *Quartier Mozart*, and *Hyenas*, Senegal, by Djibril Diop Mambety). My point here is not that the reflexive style is better than other narrative styles – such a claim would be as absurd as to say that *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is better than *War and Peace* – but that whereas black African films emphasise the authenticity of local cultures, Arab

films seem to play an intermediary role between African and European cinema.

Carthage '92 could also be seen as marking the rise of auteur cinema in Africa and the end of films that speak for a country or continent. Attia himself has produced two of the most personal film-makers in the Maghreb: Ferid Boughedir and Nouri Bouzid. Boughedir's *Halfaouine* can be read as a loving remembrance of the author's childhood, with romantic scenes of the boy discovering women in Turkish bath houses, while Bouzid's films are characterised as autobiographies in which the author settles his accounts with his father, the government, and contemporary ideologies. But it was Djibril Diop Mambety's *Hyenas* – a screen adaptation of Friedrich Dürrenmatt's *The Visit* that tells the story of an old woman who returns to her village in the Sahel, after years of exile in the west, to take revenge on the man who betrayed her – which exemplifies the entry of an auteurist viewpoint into African cinema.

On the surface, *Hyenas* is a post-modern allegory of African women's revenge on the men

who silence them, take their bodies and often, in one of the negative effects of polygamy, push them into prostitution. The film also parodies Africa's dependency on western agencies such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, which force its people to conform to the ethics of western market systems at the expense of local social and cultural traditions. (On her return, in a chauffeured car with a retinue of young and beautiful women, the old woman buys up everything, including people's sense of honour, eventually driving the townspeople to murder one of their own.)

But *Hyenas* is also an auteur film. Mambety himself appears as the judge hand-picked by the woman and the death sentence he passes symbolises both the artist's ambivalent attitude to money and the director's condemnation of sexism in African cultures. The engagement of the director as auteur is reinforced in a magnificent scene near the end of the film in which Mambety looks down from the top of a hill on the townspeople as they prepare to kill the condemned man. The whole scene is filmed from the point of view of Mambety, the omniscient narrator, and as the townspeople perform their traditional ritual to legitimise the murder of one of their own people for money, a close-up of Mambety's face reveals his sarcastic smile. 'Afro-pessimism', a new term current in African cities, takes on a clearer meaning as one watches in such films the strangulation of youth and women at the hands of traditions led by men. In its use of a powerful, beautiful older black woman to advance the narrative, *Hyenas* also enters into a dialogue with films such as *Yaaba* (Ouedraogo), *Yeelen* (Souleymane Cissé), and *Daughters of the Dust* (Julie Dash).

Hyenas did not run for an award, but Mambety was to Carthage '92 what John Ford and Orson Welles were to Cannes. He was received like a star, surrounded by photographers and fans, dressed in an African shirt that was black on one side and white on the other, symbolising his hopes for peace between Arab and black Africans. It was clear that Mambety and Attia belong to a new era of African and Arab cinema: one marked by quality films, stars, professional producers and festival organisers.

THE FUTURE OF THE BBC

Is the BBC confused about its responsibilities, wanting to be both public service and commercial player?

By Nicholas Garnham

● "Broadcasting is at the heart of British society. The structure and composition of the broadcasting industry, the purpose and motivation of broadcasters, and the programmes and services they offer are vital factors in reflecting and shaping that society".

As the BBC rightly points out in *Extending Choice*, its response to the recent government Green Paper on the corporation's future, broadcasting is of central importance to Britain's culture and polity. Not only does broadcasting, and especially television, dominate our cultural landscape in its own right, consuming an astonishing two-thirds of our leisure time, but it also serves as the access point to other cultural realms – drama, literature, the visual arts and music – while at the same time providing the preferred source of the information and debate upon which our citizenship depends.

What the government and the BBC are now asking themselves and us – as viewers, listeners, licence-fee payers and voters – is whether there is still a need for public service broadcasting within the broadcasting spectrum, and if so, what role it should play and what institutional form it should take. Public service broadcasting is as much an ideal or aspiration as an

actual historical practice, and one of the key questions in Britain since broadcasting's birth has been how to disentangle the potentials of public service broadcasting from the practice of the BBC itself. While reading *Extending Choice*, one could be forgiven for forgetting that it is the future of public service broadcasting, not of the BBC, that should be at the centre of the current debate.

The essence of public service broadcasting is the provision, to all citizens on equal terms and as an enabling condition of such citizenship, of a site for the cultural expression and exchange through which social identities are formed, and of access to the information and debate upon which democratic politics is founded. In order to fulfil this role, the site should be as free as possible from the distorting effects of the exercise of economic or state power.

In more practical terms, public service broadcasting can be defined by reference to its programming policy, funding and system of accountability. First, it must provide to the widest possible range of audiences or taste publics. Crucially, the purpose of its programmes is to meet the needs of members of the public rather than of advertisers, share-

holders or politicians. Where funding is concerned, it is neither advertising- nor subscription-financed, and is not pursued for profit. And finally, since such broadcasting is not accountable through the market and is using publicly provided resources, it requires some 'political' form of governance to ensure its responsibility to the public it supposedly serves.

The argument against any continuing role for public service broadcasting is clear and familiar, and is rehearsed by both the government and the BBC in their recent publications. First, it is argued that public service broadcasting is the historical product of scarcity. With a limited number of available channels, using the scarce public resource of the radio spectrum, it was proper for governments to ensure that a general programme was broadcast, reaching and appealing to all citizens and paid for by a compulsory licence fee. Now, it is argued, technological development will by the end of the decade make available numerous alternative, commercially funded channels. This makes available to anyone who wants it enough programme choice, and by reducing licence fee-funded broadcasting to a small audience share makes the licence fee as a general tax on all viewers politically unsustainable. A further criticism of the concept of public service broadcasting holds that the idea that an organisation such as the BBC can claim to speak for and to a national culture fails to take account of the post-modern fragmentation of contemporary British society.

The current exchange is but the climactic phase of a debate with a long history. The problems posed to the BBC's position by what it refers to as "the fragmentation of society into discrete social, economic, racial and religious groups" became glaringly apparent as long ago as the late 60s and fuelled the great debate on access and accountability that preceded and fed into the Annan Committee report of 1977. This represented the first serious challenge to the BBC's hegemony. The BBC managed to resist that challenge, which it feared, loathed and deeply misunderstood. The chance to reform public service broadcasting and to save it from the institutional embrace of the BBC was thus lost for nearly two decades, and the search for a more responsive style of public service broadcasting deflected on to Channel 4 and the creation of the so-called 'Independent' sector.

In the 80s, public service broadcasting throughout western Europe faced a different set of challenges, from market forces. Technological expansion appeared to remove the justification of public service broadcasting as a necessary response to a scarcity of wavelengths, while at the same time public funding was undermined by the general shift away from the social-democratic, welfare-state model of public service provision towards privatisation and competitive market provision within a regulatory framework. In Britain, under successive Thatcher governments, this tide ran with particular force. Viewed in this light, the BBC seemed a grotesque, inefficient, and, what was worse, left-leaning anomaly: it was definitely not 'one of us'. Let it be financed by advertising and then be privatised, the

Adam Smith Institute and other Thatcherite agencies agreed.

The left, meanwhile, found it difficult to mobilise in the corporation's defence. It had argued throughout the 70s that the BBC was culturally elitist and, behind a smokescreen of impartiality, biased against progressive political forces. So the aspirations of the left to cultural pluralism and social and political libertarianism were enshrined in the creation of Channel 4, ironically the first act of broadcasting policy of the Thatcher government. And yet against all the odds, the BBC survived. Indeed, because the main brunt of the new competitive forces was borne by commercial television, the BBC arguably enters the 90s in a stronger position than it entered the 80s.

What is striking about the recent government Green Paper is how much of a change in the political climate it signals. No doubt this can be explained in part by the recognition on all sides of the mess made of the reform of commercial broadcasting and how politically embarrassing the reverberations of those changes could still turn out to be. Thus it seems clear that the government seems to want as little change as possible in the role, status and funding of the BBC. Ironically, those changes that are suggested – for instance, a Public Service Broadcasting Council to replace the governors, or greater accountability to Parliament and the public through the use of performance indicators – echo the suggestions of the radical left fringe in the 70s, enshrined now as Conservative government policy.

Indeed, the BBC now appears more critical of its traditions and more fearful for the future than the government itself, and the corporation's response is significantly more Thatcherite than the Green Paper. The result is that *Extending Choice* is an uneasy mix of at least three registers of discourse. There are the value-for-money, efficiency- and market-oriented arguments of the Thatcher years, which give us Producer Choice, the BBC as a major player on the international programme market, and the entrepreneurial development of new, commercial sources of income, such as a satellite and cable television news channel. Then there is the new-look, public service-in-the-90s BBC, which will provide distinctive, high-quality British culture responsive to the regional, ethnic and social diversity of contemporary Britain. And finally there is the voice of the old Reithian BBC, of nation-talking-peace-untonation via the World Service, of educational broadcasting, and of the inestimable advantages of the BBC doing everything.

The undigested heritage of the Thatcher years leads, in particular, to the redefinition and impoverishment of the concept of public service as merely the negative reflection of the market. In the BBC's words, it is to focus on "performing a set of clearly defined roles that best complement the enlarged commercial sector". Underlying this view is a conception of broadcasting as merely offering a series of programme choices to consumers. From this position, the problem of public service broadcasting is then defined as one of market share. It is argued that faced with massively extended

competition, the BBC will see its audience share decline towards 20 per cent in the early 2000s and that by the end of the 90s the licence fee will sink as a proportion of broadcast-industry revenue to between 25 and 30 per cent.

Why the BBC should choose to fight on this ground is difficult to understand, as it is *audience reach* rather than *audience share* that is crucial to the concept of public service. In a multi-channel environment, *everyone's* share is likely to drop, while the price per viewing minute is likely to rise, making the licence fee even better value than at present. Such an argument also assumes that the licence fee will remain at the same level in *real* terms – a matter for political decision and by no means inevitable. To argue the public service case in audience-share terms is like suggesting that presidential elections in the US should be abolished because voter participation has dropped below 30 per cent.

So the BBC argues that its "overriding public purpose is to extend choice by guaranteeing access for everyone in the country to programming services that are of unusually high quality and that are, or might be, at risk in the purely commercially funded sector of the market". It then attempts to put flesh on these bones by identifying four programming roles:

"a) The provision of the comprehensive, in-depth and impartial news and information coverage across a range of broadcasting outlets that is needed to support a fair and informed debate.

"b) Supporting and stimulating the development and expression of British culture and entertainment.

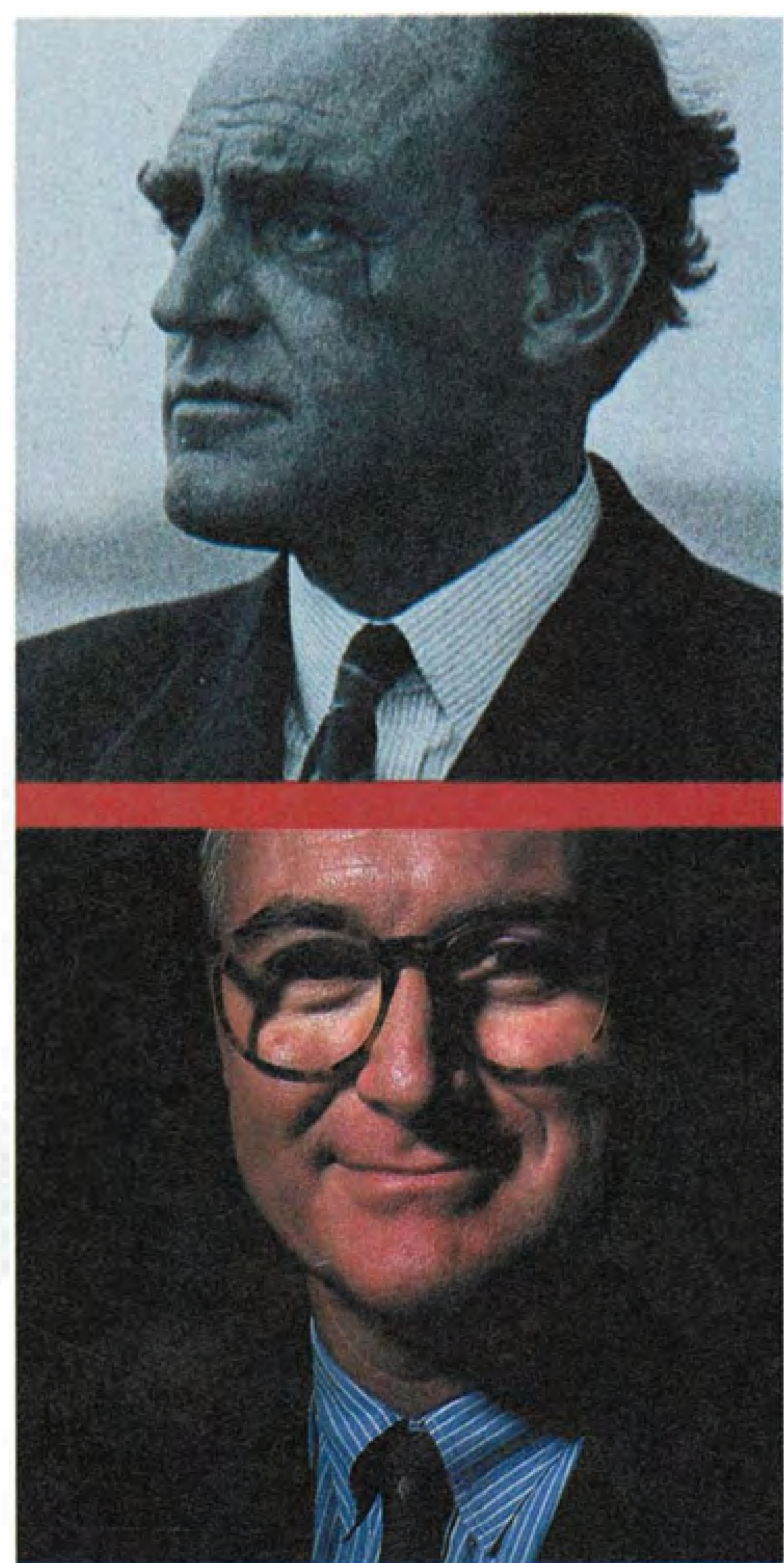
"c) Guaranteeing the provision of programming and services that create opportunities for education.

"d) Stimulating the communication of culture and ideas between Britain and abroad".

It then goes on to state that it "should pursue its primary roles through the distinctiveness and quality of its own output; through the way that it structures its programme schedules; through the standards that it sets for itself and for the whole industry".

At first sight, this does indeed appear to define the proper role for public service broadcasting. In particular, it makes the crucial point that a public service must be defined in terms of its whole schedule. This is crucial because there are now those stalking the land, Melvyn Bragg opportunistically to the fore, who argue that the BBC should be replaced by a Public Service Broadcasting Council which would distribute licence-fee finance to any 'public service' programme, wherever it was broadcast. Such a council was first proposed in 1986 by the Peacock Committee. The idea was to create, in effect, an Arts Council of the Air: a deeply elitist concept and way of financing the cultural tastes of its advocates in the name of public service. But the BBC gives away too much to its enemies by its use of the weasel words "distinctiveness and quality" and by proposing that it withdraw from areas in which it is no longer able to make an original contribution.

The BBC cannot, it seems, have it both ways. Either public service is distinguished by the



Public service men: should the ghost of Lord Reith, top, haunt the present director general, John Birt, above?

way it schedules programmes to appeal to the widest range of interests and publics during the available viewing and listening time and by its mode of address – talking to intelligent citizens rather than pandering to manipulable consumers – in which case there are no programme types which are by definition outside its remit. Or, the corporation means to withdraw into a cultural and intellectual ghetto within which quality is defined in elitist, separatist or exclusionary terms. This clearly raises the question of by whom and according to which criteria the terms of the debate and parameters of British culture are to be defined. Equally seriously, the new proposal could be seen simply as the BBC up to its old trick of defining public service as whatever it chooses to do and as continuing, despite its professions of a more circumscribed role, its old imperial ways. It is difficult to avoid, when reading *Extending Choice*, two questions: isn't this what they are supposed to have been doing all along, and what exactly are they proposing to give up – apart from the Top 40 on Radio 1 and local radio – in return for moving into a cable- and satellite-delivered continuous television news service and expanded international televi- ►

If turning programme production over to the pressures of the crudest market forces is such a good thing, why bother with the BBC at all?

◀ sion services? Crucially, if planning is based on an assumption of a frozen real licence fee at best, or at worst a steadily shrinking one, how are these aspirations to be paid for?

Everyone in the industry knows that any broadcaster would love to be able to deliver high-quality news and current affairs plus distinctive British programming without the aid of cheap imports. But the circle cannot be squared economically and the competition for the best programme-making talent is intense. The BBC argues that the extra money can be found from efficiency savings and from the more aggressive commercial exploitation of its programmes through foreign sales and the granting of secondary rights to commercial broadcasters, on the model of UK Gold. There are two problems here. First, this extra income is likely to remain marginal: tens of millions of pounds against a licence-fee income of £1,400 million. Second, the effects of these developments are likely to undercut the central, public service purpose of the corporation. At the centre of the BBC's position is a Thatcherite discourse of market efficiency – and one senses that this is now more central to the thinking of the BBC's senior management and governors than it is to the government itself. Of course, the efficient and accountable use of public money is important. But this does not mean accepting, as does *Extending Choice*, the dubious argument that the BBC has been suffering from major inefficiencies (as opposed to some administrative fat) that can be cured by embracing enthusiastically what it calls “a new structural model” of the industry, “characterised by increasing flexibility of employment practices and conditions, use of freelance and contracted staff, and mobility” – in particular, increased use of independent producers and the introduction of an internal market in the form of Producer Choice.

Whatever the financial saving, the cost of such a move has already produced a serious erosion of morale among the very creative talent needed to fulfil the BBC's bright new purposes, coupled with a shift of decision-making power, in a very un-public service direction away from creative programme-makers and towards commissioning editors and cost accountants. If turning programme production over to the pressures of the crudest market forces – which is the real state of the UK television production industry – is such a good

thing, why bother with the BBC at all, except possibly as publisher-broadcaster?

This may indeed be the hidden agenda; it is certainly likely to be the end result of the dynamic set in motion by the independent quota and Producer Choice. At that point, all producers will have to dance to the tune of the international programme market. The BBC will be just one purchaser, and possibly an impoverished one at that. The possibility of building a creative tradition, of training and nursing talent, of experiment, of establishing fruitful links with and roots in a British culture more widely defined than Soho and the Groucho Club will have been irrevocably destroyed.

But market criteria are seen as the way to discipline broadcasters, to ensure they are accountable. The problem of accountability has haunted public service broadcasting since its birth. If one accepts the ideal of public service as free of both commercial and direct state control, then one is faced by the fundamental question posed by the Beveridge Committee in 1949: “What alternatives are there to competition and to Parliamentary control as a means of preventing broadcasting from falling into the hands of an uncontrolled bureaucracy?” The Green Paper appears implicitly to rule out commercial competition, accepting that, except possibly at the margins, public service broadcasting will continue to be funded largely by the licence fee or other public funding. How, then, is the use of that money to be accounted for and how are the programming policies to be defined, implemented and monitored?

It is clear from *Extending Choice* that the BBC is neither willing nor able to address this question seriously. First, because it continues to equate the future of public service broadcasting with its own survival as a single, integrated institution. Second, as the way *Extending Choice* was prepared and presented shows, because it still doesn't understand what accountability to a diverse culture and polity might mean. The preparation of *Extending Choice* was based on the assumption that 100 or so middle and senior managers and their consultants can decide in secret and without any wider consultation what is best for the future of public service broadcasting in Britain. And the way it is presented assumes that it is the job of the governors to defend the institutional interests of the BBC rather than to represent the wider public interest. The BBC's Board of Governors was intended at its inception to be a proper regulatory body, quite separate from management, with their own research capabilities and channels of communication with the public – a model consciously aborted by Reith that has never been reconstructed, despite moves by the Beveridge and Annan Committees in that direction. That the BBC can now suggest a clearer separation of the roles of the governors and Board of Management shows that even it has an inkling that something needs to be done.

On the issue of accountability, the Green Paper marks a clear advance on the position adopted by the BBC. It recognises that “to many, the present arrangements for accountability seem haphazard and incoherent”. It suggests a clearer distinction “between the actions

of ministers, for which they would always be answerable, and the activities of the BBC” and goes on to suggest that “there could be arrangements for regular, but not continuous, Parliamentary examination of the BBC's programming and financial objectives and how far it can meet them, so calling Ministers and the BBC to account for their different responsibilities. In this way, parliament, representing the public, could ensure that the public throughout the UK were getting what they wanted from the BBC at a price they could afford”.

All this seems eminently sensible, but it doesn't get to the heart of the problem because it is working within the existing model, in which the BBC is a unitary institution and the governors are the BBC. Which is why the proposal for a Public Service Broadcasting Council (PSBC) is so important. The Green Paper hovers between two versions of this proposal: in one, the PSBC would, in effect, simply be the independent Board of Governors regulating the BBC; in the second, it would receive all licence-fee income and “any other sources of finance” (for instance the current Foreign Office grant for overseas broadcasting) and distribute this money to public service broadcasting activities which it would also regulate. One of the dangers of this model, as we have already seen, is that it can be read as opening the way to the funding of ‘public service’ programmes wherever broadcast, and would thus be, in David Mellor's words, “a stake to the heart of the BBC”, by diverting already insufficient licence-fee income away from the corporation to commercial broadcasters. On the other hand, if public service broadcasting services are defined clearly as those financed exclusively from publicly provided funds, thus ending the current damaging and growing confusion at the heart of the BBC's activities between its public service and commercial activities, then the second PSBC model has much to commend it. It allows us to think of splitting the BBC's various activities, for instance radio from television and overseas from home broadcasting. It allows greater transparency of finance, for instance in the division between radio and television funding, and a clear institutional separation between broadcasting management and regulation. This would in turn make possible other models of public service broadcasting management, for instance the franchising of service provision or the creation of a network of autonomous regional stations. That such a relationship between broadcaster and regulator is possible is demonstrated by the old IBA.

I have no doubt that the current public service status quo can be preserved for another decade at least and that political forces are moving us in that direction. But to accept the BBC's current prospectus will once again mean to put off solving the problem of accountability, while public service broadcasting is undermined from within by the forces of the market. I believe we can do better than that, and that the Green Paper gives us a glimpse of the possibility of redesigning a public service broadcasting system more suited to our polity and culture. Let us not throw it away, as we did at the time of Annan, out of nostalgia or fear.

Obituaries

Bob Baker

1991 The death in March of silent superstar Vilma Banky did not become public knowledge until over a year later; and in December: Jack Laird, prolific television writer, producer, notably of the series *Night Gallery*; Jack Otterson, art director at Universal (*Flame of New Orleans*, *Arabian Nights*); Curt Bois, character actor in Hollywood (*Casablanca*) and Germany (*Wings of Desire*).

● **January** Mike J. Frankovich, executive at Columbia; Ginette Leclerc, skilled portrayer of hookers, hussies and fallen women generally (*La Femme du boulanger*, *Le Corbeau*); Dame Judith Anderson; Andrew Marton, who directed the exciting bits of other people's movies (*Ben-Hur*, *55 Days at Peking*) and the dull entireties of his own; Bill Naughton, playwright (*Alfie*, *The Family Way*); Herbert G. Luft, columnist and critic, expert on German cinema; Freddie Bartholomew, paradigm of well-scrubbed boyhood in pre-war Hollywood (*David Copperfield*, *Captains Courageous*); Ken Darby, top musical arranger/conductor; José Ferrer.

● **February** Leon Clore, producer (*Every Day Except Christmas*, *The French Lieutenant's Woman*); Jack Kinney, Disney cartoon director, responsible for much of the Goofy series; Meade Roberts, scriptwriter (*The Fugitive Kind*, *The Stripper*); Ray Danton, whose reptilian good looks were used to best effect in Boetticher's *The Rise and Fall of Legs Diamond*; Robert W. Russell, writer specialising in comedy (*The More the Merrier*, *Come September*); Angélique Pettyjohn, starlet of the early 70s turned hardcore-porn performer; Tadeusz Lomnicki, before Cybulski, the emblem of post-war Polish youth (*5 Boys of Barska Street*, *A Generation*).

Doreen Montgomery (born 12 April 1913) Scriptwriters often get a raw deal from historians, unless they are the author of the original text, or engaged in quality productions. The status of the jobbing scriptwriter, particularly if she is female, is usually minimal. And any attempts to rewrite the traditional canon are fraught with difficulties, due to a paucity of evidence. The death of Doreen Montgomery highlights these problems with some urgency.

Montgomery had a long and varied career in British media. Born in 1913 and educated in Scotland, she submitted material to ABPC in the late 30s, where her scripts caught the eye of Walter Mycroft, who put her under contract. She adapted novels for reasonably successful films (*At the Villa Rose*, *Just William*), but it was her move to Gainsborough in 1942 which allowed her to develop in a different way. Gainsborough was the only studio to provide a creative space for women writers, and Montgomery developed a strong working relationship with Margaret Kennedy and Aimée Stuart as well as collaborating closely with Leslie Arliss and R.J. Minney, who made a profitable cycle of melodramas for female audiences. Montgomery joined this group in founding the Screenwriters' Association, which succeeded in wresting better conditions from the studios.

As Montgomery persevered at Gainsbor-

ough, she was given increasing control over scripts, and on *The Man in Grey* (1943), *Fanny by Gaslight* (1944) and *Love Story* (1944) she has progressively major credits. All her scripts were based on novels by other writers, and she adapted them in interesting ways. All were given a firmer middle-class base; all had a greater sense of contemporary relevance; all raised the emotional temperature of the originals, foregrounding the nuancing of feelings. In Montgomery's scripts, characters are judged on their emotional literacy. She scripted only one film at Gainsborough without the benefit of a novelist, *Victory Wedding*, directed by Jessie Matthews.

After the war, Montgomery worked freelance and experienced the chaos which followed the Boxes' attempts to reform scripting practices. Her speciality of emotional flair combined with wry control was no longer fashionable, though she scripted one extraordinary film, *While I Live* (known popularly as *The Dream of Olwen*). Written with a ferocious intensity, this dealt with incestuous love between sisters, somnambulism, necrophilia, the sensual pleasures of music, and reincarnation by dint of desire. Montgomery's interest in spiritualism doubtless helped her to sharpen the vapid original.

British film culture in the 50s was largely preoccupied with comedy, which was not Montgomery's metier. She worked on lacklustre crime projects such as *The Narrowing Circle* (1956) before moving into television. Her proclivity for tight narrative construction, melodramatic flavour and emotional repression and release worked well on the small screen. Montgomery played a major role in the adaptation of Cronin's *Dr Finlay's Casebook*, in which she gave greater weight to the female protagonist and greater self-awareness to the eponymous hero. She scripted key episodes of *The Avengers*, and was the creator of Cathy Gale. This character, played first by Honor Blackman, became a 60s icon, in whom sexual charisma, physical strength and verbal wisecracks made a potent combination.

Montgomery's achievements were recognised by the Writers' Guild in 1965, when she was awarded the Bronze plaque for her contribution to television series. Little formal written work remains: a play, a book on spiritualism, a few fugitive articles in trade journals. But the real artistic work rests in the scripts; and although film and television are collaborative activities, Montgomery clearly played a key role in the production of well-crafted texts in which female characters are presented as expressive and feisty.

Sue Harper

● **March** Marie Déa, ingenue of the 40s, impressive in *Les Visiteurs du soir* and as the wife of Orphée; Robert Clatworthy, art director (*Psycho*, *Ship of Fools*); Sandy Dennis, skittish and neurotic in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, *Come back to the 5 & Dime Jimmy Dean*, *Jimmy Dean*; Samuel Marx, story editor at MGM, latterly Hollywood anecdotalist; Robert Beatty, breezy Canadian player of many a British B; Art Babbitt, animator who



'The Avengers', scripted by Doreen Montgomery



'L'Enfant sauvage', shot by Nestor Almendros

Goofy, directed by Jack Kinney



made the mushrooms dance in *Fantasia*; Pare Lorentz, documentarist and film critic; Ben Arheid, producer (*The Hireling*, *Eagle's Wing*); Laslo Benedek, director of oddly assorted projects (*Death of a Salesman*, *Namu the Killer Whale*); Richard Brooks; Max Catto, aka Simon Kent, much-filmed novelist (*Trapeze*, *7 Thieves*); Jean Poiret, comic actor (Chabrol's *Inspecteur Lavardin*) and writer (*La Cage aux folles*); Helen Deutsch, MGM scriptwriter (*National Velvet*, *The 7th Cross*); Grace Stafford, wife of Walter Lantz, the voice of his superstar Woody Woodpecker; Georges Delerue, lyrical composer for Truffaut (*Tirez sur le pianiste*, *Jules et Jim*) and many others; John Ireland, tough guy; Leueen McGrath, actress (*Edward My Son*) and writer in collaboration with husband George S. Kaufman (*Silk Stockings*); Wendell Mayes, scriptwriter for Wilder, Preminger, Mulligan; Paul Henreid; Luigi De Laurentiis, brother of Dino, producer in his own right. **Nestor Almendros** (born 30 October 1930) Because of *Days of Heaven* (1978), which won him an Oscar for Best Photography, the first images one would associate with Nestor Almendros are of wheatfields, cattle herds, river crossings and steam trains – a timeless American farmland on the verge of paradise. Certainly Almendros could portray lazy afternoons in idyllic surroundings with incontestable skill – and was required to do so at length for *The Blue Lagoon* in 1980 ("I had to skirt bad taste without succumbing to it") – but it would be unjust to classify him primarily as a landscape artist. In fact, his 30-year career in international cinema spanned as extraordinary a variety of projects as any leading cameraman could wish for, from the Corman-produced *Wild Racers* (1967) to a documentary about Idi Amin (1974), or from a Bogdanovich tribute to Charlie Chaplin (1973) to the searing *Sophie's Choice* (1982) and the Kim Basinger comedy *Nadine* (1987).

Spanish-born, Almendros was a member of the Barcelona film society in his teens and, on joining his father in Cuba in 1948, formed Havana's first film club. Determined to become a director, he spent most of the Batista years in Rome and New York, writing for *Film Culture* and making "pretentious avant-garde short films that are not worth mentioning", until the arrival of Castro tempted him back to Cuba for a year of government-financed documentary production. By 1961 he was in exile once more, teaching Spanish in Paris and talking *cinéma vérité* at the Cinémathèque. For three years he didn't touch a camera. But he met Barbet Schroeder and Eric Rohmer, and when in 1964 they had a row with their cameraman for *Paris vu par...*, they tried Almendros instead. A single day's work was enough to confirm that he knew what he was doing.

That the Almendros 'look' became identified with the *nouvelle vague* is a myth he firmly discredited: it was 1966 before his first feature assignment, Rohmer's *La Collectionneuse*, and another three years before he first worked with Truffaut, on *L'Enfant sauvage*. In the decade before he was recruited to *Days of Heaven*, Almendros ►

◀ divided his life between the rigours of Rohmer (with whom he was to make a total of seven films), the inventive nostalgia of Truffaut (nine), and the wholly unpredictable excursions of Schroeder (six), a 'New Wave' producer more by accident of timing than by manifesto, who was as inquisitive about sadomasochism (*Maitresse*, 1975) as he was about apes (*Koko the Talking Gorilla*, 1977).

The learning process worked both ways: to see Rohmer's latest, *A Winter's Tale*, or Schroeder's *Single White Female* (photographed by Luciano Tovoli, an old friend from the Centro Sperimentale in Rome) is to see the Almendros touch discreetly reproduced in every frame. Almendros was a specialist in the use of natural light, reflected and diffused. What Truffaut wanted from him for *L'Enfant sauvage* was the monochrome brilliance of silent cinema, as perfected by Griffith and Stiller, and it was this indirect illumination of faces and costumes that created an authentic sense of period. When, on the strength of his work with Truffaut, Almendros teamed up with Terrence Malick for *Days of Heaven*, it was – as he points out in his autobiography, *A Man with a Camera* – not so much to imitate the American exteriors of Andrew Wyeth as to reconstruct the interiors of Vermeer, the light striking the richly furnished rooms sideways through windows and doorways.

Ironically, the sunlit settings of *Le Genou de Claire*, unmatched for sheer languor by any of Rohmer's later work, were based on Gauguin, while the New York apartments of *Kramer vs Kramer* (1979), light years away, find Meryl Streep profiled in lamplight like a figure from Piero della Francesca – which is precisely where director Robert Benton and Almendros had found the (implicitly parodic) image they wanted. It is in *Kramer vs Kramer*, too, that one finds the lie to any theory that Almendros, discovering the Panaglide during *Days of Heaven*, kept his camera floating restlessly from then on: the film is almost entirely static, and when the camera moves, it is emphatically emotional in purpose. Although the upheavals of Almendros' early years were never forgotten (in the 80s he made *Improper Conduct* and *Nobody Listened*, two controversial documentaries about Cuba), he will have the good fortune to be remembered for some of the most disciplined and harmonious visual compositions to have graced the movies since the heyday of silent cinema.

Philip Strick

Jack Arnold (born 14 October 1916) Two of the most instantly recognisable images of 50s cinema are from films directed by Jack Arnold: the Gill Man from *The Creature from the Black Lagoon*, advancing to blaring horns with 3D claws outstretched, and Jerry Lee Lewis in *High School Confidential*, pounding rock 'n' roll in the back of a flatbed truck. Forever remembered for his Universal-International science fiction/monster movies, Arnold's other achievements include the Peter Sellers comedy, *The Mouse that Roared*, stranded somewhere between *Passport to Pimlico* and *Dr Strangelove*; the underrated blaxploitation detective item *Black Eye*; a fine Audie Murphy Western (*No Name on the Bullet*); a rare melodrama with Orson Welles (*Man in the Shadow*); crime movies (*Outside the Law*); even a sex film (*The Bunny Caper*). His only real demerits are a clutch of glossily humourless 60s comedies (*Bachelor in Par-*



'The Creature from the Black Lagoon', by Jack Arnold

adise, *Hello Down There*), several with a flagging Bob Hope. *High School Confidential's* mix of rebel sleaze (Russ Tamblyn as a high school trouble-maker with a lascivious 'aunt' played by Mamie Van Doren) and campy moral tone (Russ turns out to be an undercover narco cop out to nail drug pusher Jackie Coogan) deserves a place in the memory, especially for its outrageously hip teen talk ("tomorrow is a drag, man, tomorrow is a king-size bust"), but it is the run of science-fiction films that truly distinguishes Arnold's career from many another contract director's.

Proof that he was indeed the creative force behind such movies as *The Creature from the Black Lagoon*, *It Came from Outer Space*, *Tarantula* and *The Incredible Shrinking Man* can be gained from a viewing of *The Land Unknown* or *The Mole People*, made by exactly the same U-I unit under producer William Alland, but with Virgil Vogel holding the megaphone. Even Arnold's worst, the pulpily enjoyable *Monster on the Campus*, is better than most 50s creature features, and his best repay many viewings on late-night television or stereoscopic re-issues.

Arnold's movies often contain oddly complicated monsters: the xenomorphs of *It Came from Outer Space* are not invaders, but are using the Earth as a galactic lay-by while repairing a broken-down UFO; mad scientist Leo G. Carroll of *Tarantula* is a decent man suffering from a bizarre distorting disease; the glowing brain of *The Space Children* is one of a wave of anti-nuclear protestors from beyond the stars. Also characteristic are his eerily-evoked and unusual locations (the deserts of *Tarantula* and *It Came from Outer Space*; the jungle of *The Creature from the Black Lagoon*; the bombed-out alien world of the uncredited sequences he directed for *This Island Earth*; the beach of *The Space Children*; the suburban house turned dangerous adventure playground in *The Incredible Shrinking Man*) and strikingly conceived and seductive shock moments (the erotic sub-aqua dance between the Gill Man and a pneumatically swimsuited lady scientist; the Shrinking Man's duel with a malicious spider). Taken along with the oddly effective use of stiff but archetypal 50s leading men such as Richard Carlson, John Agar, Richard Denning and Grant Williams, partnered by such instant icons of torpedo-breasted, vacuum-cleaner-advert sexuality as Mara Corday, Barbara Rush, Lori Nelson and Julia Adams, these attributes mean that when you think of a 50s sci-fi film, you imagine an identikit of Arnold's movies.

Kim Newman

● **April** Aaga, celebrated Hindi comedian, with allegedly 500 credits to his name; Karl Tunberg, writer of *Orchestra Wives*, the Wyler *Ben-Hur*; David Miller, director who made his biggest impact with *Lonely Are the Brave*; Neville Brand, thick-set thug, leader of the *Riot in Cell Block 11*; Julian Amyes, director for small screen and occasionally for big (*A Hill in Korea*); Frankie Howerd; Benny Hill; Satyajit Ray; Ken Morgan, television lighting cameraman (*Licking Hitler*, *Prime Suspect*); Mae Clarke, hapless heroine of the first *Waterloo Bridge*, recipient of Cagney's grapefruit in *The Public Enemy*.

● **May** George Murphy, light comedian turned US senator; Jean-Claude Pascal, *jeune premier* of the 50s (*Le Rideau cramoisi*, *Le Grand Jeu*); Marlene Dietrich; John Lund, blonde

semi-star at post-war Paramount (*Foreign Affair*, *No Man of Her Own*); George Hurrell, leading Hollywood still photographer; Giuliani G. De Negri, producer, notably for the Taviani brothers; Edmund Beloin, gag writer for Jack Benny, Bob Hope, Jerry Lewis; Marisa Mell, 60s purveyor of glamour across the European Community (*French Dressing*, *Casanova 70*); Franco Rossellini, son of Renzo, nephew of Roberto, co-producer of the Gore Vidal *Caligula*.

● **June** Philip Dunne, top writer at Fox (*How Green Was My Valley*, *The Robe*), later director; Robert Morley; Leon Griffiths, writer for cinema and television, expert on criminality, comic (*Minder*) or dramatic (*The Squeeze*); Serge Daney, critic, former editor of *Cahiers du cinéma*; Carlos d'Alessio, composer (*India Song*, *Delicatessen*); Frederic I. Rinaldo, comedy writer in tandem with Robert Lees for Olsen & Johnson, Abbott & Costello; Allan Jones, MGM's house tenor.

Juris Podnieks (born 15 December 1950) "With a camera, I'm another person, with a camera I can do anything..." Juris Podnieks was only 15 when he first went to work at the Riga Film Studios. He later graduated from the cinematography faculty of VGIK, the State Cinema Institute in Moscow, and soon earned himself a national reputation as a cameraman. In 1982 he directed his first film, *Constellation of Riflemen*, about the 300 disillusioned survivors of those Latvian troops – his grandfather among them – who came to the defence of the revolution in July 1918.

International success came with *Is It Easy To Be Young?* (1987), a documentary that begins with footage shot by chance at a rock concert outside Riga. When he discovered that a group of young people had been arrested after the concert for damaging a train compartment, Podnieks embarked on the series of interviews that make up the film. *Is It Easy To Be Young?* was a sensation in the Soviet Union: here, at last, were young people – sensible, articulate, unfrightening young people – speaking their own words about their own hopes and fears. By lingering on individual faces and listening to individual voices, by renouncing a commentary ("I hate commentaries"), Podnieks discovered a lost continent.

The originality of *Is It Easy To Be Young?* led Central Television to commission from Podnieks the five hour-long documentaries about the USSR of the Gorbachev years that were broadcast in Britain in 1990 as *Hallo, Do You Hear Us?* Though he included all the key events of the period, from Chernobyl (where his group filmed with great bravery, immediately after the explosion) to the



'Is It Easy To Be Young?' by Juris Podnieks

Armenian earthquake, to national tensions in the Baltic, Transcaucasia and Central Asia – and though there are detailed and prophetic interviews with Sakharov and a temporarily outmanoeuvred Yeltsin – here too it is faces and voices, the testimony of ordinary people (again without commentary), from factory workers in Yaroslavl to a rejected bride in Uzbekistan, that give the film its density. That and some startling editing: “Montage is the most horrendous part. I don’t trust my film until I sense its rhythm is as natural as breathing”, Podnieks said in one of his last interviews.

Homeland (1991, also made for Central, and called *The Way of the Cross* in Russian) traces the rediscovery of Latvian national traditions. Again there are faces, again there are voices, but now they are singing at the 20th Latvian Song Festival, and the songs and the swaying movements of the choirs provide the thread that binds together what is probably Podnieks’ most powerful, most coherent film. Just as he was about to show his film, in January 1991, a crackdown on the Baltic independence movement led to violent repression in Vilnius and Riga. While Podnieks and his team were filming in Riga, his regular cameramen Andris Slapins and Gvido Zvaigzne were shot by troops, and footage of their deaths provides the poignant ending of the 30-minute *Postscript* (1991) to *Homeland*.

On the first day of the attempted putsch in the Soviet Union, 19 August 1991, Podnieks was again filming in Riga, when he was arrested by troops. Finding that he was the director of *Is It Easy To Be Young?*, they decided not to beat him, but when he was handed over to the notorious special police, the OMON, he was not so lucky. Podnieks’ last film for Central, *End of Empire* (1991), combines footage of Moscow during the days of the coup with a montage of sequences from his earlier films. It is his least personal, most unfocused work, and Podnieks spoke more than once in late interviews of his fear that he was repeating himself, of his desire to start to make the feature films he had long dreamed of.

Juris Podnieks survived when a helicopter he was travelling in over Armenia was shot at; he survived the shootings in Riga that killed his friends. It is tragic and absurd that he should have died in a freak diving accident just when a new stage in his career might have begun.

Julian Graffy

● **July** Franco Cristaldi, whose Vides company produced work by Visconti, Rosi, Tornatore; Kanan Devi, Bengali superstar; Reginald Beck, cutter for Olivier, Losey, etc; Hans Feld, British-based publicist and critic; Rudolf Ising, pioneer animator, with sidekick Hugh Harman, at Disney, Warner Bros, MGM; Herman King, the last of the producer King brothers; Christian Blackwood, maker of films about film-makers Corman, Lino Brocka *et al*; Arletty; Amjad Khan, star of dozens of Indian films.

● **August** Ephraim Katz, author of the compendious *International Film Encyclopedia*; Simon Hartog, co-founder of the London Film-Makers Co-op, of Large Door Productions, general mover and shaker; John Sturges; David E. Rose, independent producer of various Anglo-American ventures (*The End of the Affair*, *The Safecracker*); George R. Nelson, set decorator (*The Manchurian Candidate*, *The Right Stuff*); Hideo Gosha, director



Denholm Elliott



Laurel and Hardy, teamed up by Hal Roach

of numerous samurai movies; Claude Barma, hard-working director of French television.

● **September** Morris Carnovsky, character actor with familiar career parabola: Group Theatre/Hollywood/the blacklist; Henry Ephron, writer/producer (*Carousel*, *Desk Set*), husband of Phoebe, father of Nora; Mervyn Johns, gruff-voiced character actor (*Went the Day Well?*, *Dead of Night*); Gerald Hanley, novelist and scriptwriter (*The Blue Max*); H. F. Koenekamp, special-effects photographer at Warner Bros; Ruth Nelson, another Group alumna, wife of John Cromwell; Anthony Perkins; Arkedy Ruderman, Russian documentarist who came to prominence during the reign of Gorbachev and died filming troubles in Central Asia; John Taylor, brother-in-law of John Grierson and pillar of the documentary movement in his own right; Bill Williams, honest citizen frequently beset by noir-related problems (*Deadline at Dawn*, *The Clay Pigeon*), later television’s Kit Carson; William Douglas-Home, prolific playwright (*The Reluctant Debutante*), occasional scriptwriter (*The Colditz Story*); Jean Aurenche, writing partner of Pierre Bost on films by Autant-Lara, Clément, the Allégrets; Bill Rowe, Elstree sound engineer.

● **October** Denholm Elliott; Ben Maddow, scriptwriter (*The Asphalt Jungle*), director (*The Savage Eye*), blacklisted; Shirley Booth, Broadway heavyweight who enjoyed a brief Hollywood vogue (*Come Back Little Sheba*); Anna Hill Johnstone, costume designer (*East of Eden*, *The Godfather*); Vladek Sheybal, actor who relocated from Poland (*Kanal*) to the UK (various Ken Russells); Cleavon Little, the black sheriff in *Blazing Saddles*.

● **November** Raoul André, director of Eddie Constantine vehicles; Premnath, star of the Hindi cinema; José Sáenz de Heredia, prolific Spanish director; Mark Rosenberg, producer, partner with Sydney Pollack in their Mirage company; Chuck Connors, portrayer of cowboys (*The Big Country*), Indians (*Geronimo*) and sundry hard cases; Gregory Markopoulos, avant-garde film-maker; Maurice Ohana, protean composer with a mixed bag of movie credits (*Goha*, *Les Dents du singe*); Diane Varsi, fresh-faced Fox starlet of the late 50s (*Peyton Place*, *Compulsion*); John Foreman, production partner of Paul Newman; Sterling Holloway, hayseed player with a remarkable set of vocal cords, heard on the soundtracks of various Disney cartoons.

Hal Roach (born 14 January 1892) was older than the movies and had been in Hollywood since the first studios were opened. Even before he arrived there in 1912, he had seen a good deal of pioneering America. At 17 he ran away from home in Elmira, New York – leaving behind also his given names of Harold Eugene – to prospect for gold in Alaska. When the anticipated riches did not materialise, he became in succession a mule skinner, saloon gambler and haulage man.

Drifting to Los Angeles, his ability to ride won him a job acting in cowboy pictures, for \$25 a week, at the new Universal studio. There he met another young bit player, Harold Lloyd. When Roach inherited \$3,000, they set up their own company to make one-reel comedies starring Lloyd as a Chaplin-inspired tramp character, Willie Work. The films found no market, and Lloyd went to Keystone while Roach joined Essanay, where he and Chaplin became friends. A few months later, as the Rolin

Company with Pathé distribution, Roach and Lloyd tried again; as Lonesome Luke, Lloyd was launched as a star in his own right. Later Roach helped Lloyd to develop his definitive character of the diffident young man in horn-rim glasses. After their ultimate parting, Roach was inspired to team two comedians who had been working solo for years. Laurel and Hardy were to pass into mythology.

The style of the Roach stars – Lloyd, Laurel and Hardy, Our Gang, Thelma Todd and Zasu Pitts, Charlie Chase, Will Rogers, Edgar Kennedy, Snub Pollard – exemplifies the difference between Roach and his rival in the comedy business, Mack Sennett. Sennett’s films tended to frenetic action and slapstick, whereas Roach preferred well-constructed stories and a more restrained, realistic and sophisticated style of character comedy. Harold Lloyd and Stan and Ollie are recognisably human, sharing the foibles, feelings and anxieties of an audience which is also engaged in the permanent battle with the perilous uncertainties of the contemporary world.

Roach showed a shrewd anticipation of taste, which enabled him to change and rationalise his product, and was evidently a gifted organiser. He weathered the transition to sound, and moved from shorts into features – in silent days with Lloyd, in the 30s with Laurel and Hardy. As well as the comedy-star vehicles, his feature productions included the Topper films, starring Constance Bennett and Cary Grant, and *One Million B.C.*, on which he found an assignment for the forgotten D. W. Griffith (Roach gratefully remembered visiting the set of *Intolerance* in his youth). Of his prestigious production of *Of Mice and Men*, directed by Lewis Milestone, he said disarmingly, “It’s only Laurel and Hardy being serious”.

During the war, the studio became Fort Roach, turned over to the production of propaganda and training films for the armed services. After the war, Roach and his son Hal Junior (who predeceased him) converted the studio to television production until its closure in the late 50s.

Roach continued to the end of his life to take a close interest in the movie business, always ready to find new ways to exploit his old classics. An unrepentant iconoclast, he was a pioneer enthusiast for colourisation, particularly of his own films. He remained in good enough shape to celebrate his centenary, and a month later travelled to Europe for a tribute at the Berlin festival. He confessed to being tired by a tour of the vast acres of Babelsberg, but his packed programme of press interviews was not seriously affected. Showmanship, with Roach, outlasted everything.

David Robinson

● **December** Luis Alcoriza, Buñuel’s script collaborator; Percy Herbert, British icon of the 50s – the tough sergeant, the pugnacious prole; Hank Worden, portrayer of scrawny simpletons from *The Searchers* to *Twin Peaks*; Randall Duell, art director (*Singin’ in the Rain*, *Blackboard Jungle*); C. V. Whitney, money man behind Selznick *et al*; Liam O’Leary, critic and archivist; Dana Andrews; Stella Adler, influential teacher and Method proselytiser; Lord (Ted) Willis, writer who aspired to be the British Chayevsky (*The Blue Lamp*, *Woman in a Dressing Gown*); Vivienne Segal, successful star of Broadway musicals who was less successful in Hollywood.

A rare sorrow

If I had to pick the five greatest Western directors of all time, the problem wouldn't be to pick five, but to figure out how many Westerns a director had to make to be considered a Western director. Does one film do it? Can I make a case for Marlon Brando, since *One-Eyed Jacks* is one of my five favourite Westerns? How about Philip Kaufman? Can I with good conscience put him on the list above King Vidor, Henry Hathaway and Sam Peckinpah, on the strength of *The Great Northfield Minnesota Raid* (the best of the Jesse James movies with Robert Duvall, the scariest and most psychotic Jesse on film), and writing the script (and directing about a week) of *The Outlaw Josey Wales*.

This dilemma solved itself when I came to Monte Hellman. There's no way in hell Monte ain't going on the list. I don't care if he's only done three, but two of them – *Ride in the Whirlwind* and *The Shooting* – demand that honour. Monte also made me come to grips with the whole Marlon Brando/*One-Eyed Jacks* problem, because much as I like *The Shooting*, had he never made it, just doing *Ride* would have been enough for me.

Producer Fred Roos, who would later produce *Apocalypse Now*, had a deal to do two films in the Philippines to be shot concurrently. He had seen Roger Corman's *The Terror*, starring Boris Karloff and Jack Nicholson, and had heard that two young directors had shot the majority of it. Their names were Monte Hellman and Francis Ford Coppola. Roos' response was "send me either one". Monte got the job.

The deal was simple. Roos had to make two cheap action-adventure films set in the Philippines. He had the script for one, a war film called *Back Door to Hell*, but the second one was open. Monte suggested that they use the young actor from *The Terror*, Jack Nicholson, who he knew was also a screenwriter. The idea was that Jack would act in *Back Door to Hell*, write the script for the second film, and act in that one as well. The script Nicholson wrote was *Flight to Fury*.

Monte's first film, *Beast From the Haunted Cave*, written by the great Charles Griffith, was a lot of fun. *Back Door to Hell* is pretty good, but *Flight to Fury* was the first of the great Monte Hellman pictures, and *Little Shop of Horrors* aside, the first film in which Jack Nicholson came into his own as an actor. Nicholson, in a part he wrote for himself, finally had the assurance, the experience, the words and the director to deliver the performance that had eluded him up to this point.

The film's other lead was Howard Hawks' regular Dewey Martin (*The Big Sky*, *The Thing*), an underrated actor who should have done better in the 50s than he did. Nicholson's feral, hip, cerebral, 60s style of acting plays well with Martin's hardboiled, tough 50s cool-guy style. (On a personal note, I get a special kick from watching them because Martin resembles Michael Madsen in my movie *Reservoir Dogs*, and Nicholson resembles actor Steve Buscemi.)

The teaming of Hellman and Nicholson played well too. As can be seen from the film I made, I like what I call "kitchen-sink movies", which means "there's everything



Quentin Tarantino reflects on great Westerns and celebrates Monte Hellman's 'Ride in the Whirlwind', with its mix of innocence and desperation

in it but...", and there are about four movies crammed into *Flight to Fury*. The first 15 minutes are an action adventure murder mystery full of exotic locations (the Philippines), a rugged hero (Martin), a sexy Oriental femme fatale (who will be dead by the fourth scene), and shifty characters who are not what they appear (Nicholson at first appears to be a likeable nerdy guy, but then is quickly revealed to be an ice-cold killer with a hidden agenda). Then Martin and Nicholson hop on an aeroplane, where we're introduced to a whole new batch of interesting and suspicious characters. After flying the friendly skies with them for about 20 minutes, as they sniff each other out and philosophise (Nicholson's conversation about death with a fellow passenger, the late Jacqueline Hellman, seems to come straight out of a Hal Hartley movie), in what plays like the oddest and greatest Airport movie ever made, the plane crashes. Which turns the film into a skewed version of Max Frisch's novel *Homo Faber*, as the survivors stranded in the jungle fight to stay alive, fight bands of marauding pirates, and fight and kill one another.

Hellman and Nicholson made a terrific little film and a terrific team, so a partnership between the two was struck. Nicholson wrote a script for a Western that the two could do cheap, and they took that script, *Ride in the Whirlwind*, to Roger Corman. Corman liked Nicholson's script very much and agreed to do it. Then added, in that way that has made the man a legend, "Since you'll be out there on location, why don't you do two movies?" So the two partners repeated the duties they had just done with Fred Roos in the Philippines: shooting the two movies concurrently with the same crew, Nicholson writing and starring in one, acting in the other and Hellman directing both. However, this time Nicholson would produce both films as well.

The other film was *The Shooting*, starring Warren Oates, Millie Perkins, Will Hutchins (then star of the television show *Sugarfoot*) and Nicholson as a Jack Palance-inspired gunfighter named Billy Spear. The script was written by a friend of Nicholson's from Jeff Corey's acting class, Carole Eastman, who would go on to write for Nicholson *Five Easy Pieces*, *The Fortune* and *Man Trouble*. Her script, written under the pseudonym Adrien Joyce, is like a metaphysical version of Budd Boetticher's *Ride Lonesome*. Corman apparently hated it, but proceeded anyway because it was the only one ready to go, and at that price he couldn't lose.

Today *The Shooting* is widely considered the masterpiece of the two. Kevin Thomas, film critic for the *Los Angeles Times* wrote: "The difference between the two [*Ride in the Whirlwind* and *The Shooting*] is the difference between the definitely good and the arguably great". Most critics in France and the US agree (with Michel Ciment an important exception), and Monte himself prefers *The Shooting*. But for me, it's the simplicity, the naturalistic tone, the awkward-sounding (because it's so authentic) cowboy vernacular, the feeling of sadness that's between every line, the burst of ridiculous

comic moments, the beautiful underplaying of Nicholson and Cameron Mitchell, all wrapped up in a wing-ding plot, that make *Ride in the Whirlwind* one of the most authentic and brilliant Westerns ever made.

Monte made Westerns unlike any before or since. He slowed down all the action so the scenes play at a real-time pace unheard of in a Western. The effect is almost as if Monte were in the projection booth, grabbing a fistful of film as it passes in front of the bulb and yanking it down, so each frame is illuminated longer for better examination. The film opens with a stagecoach hold-up that produces giggles due to the lazy, laconic manner of the robbers. It's the exact opposite of the snappy action scene we've become accustomed to (a robber gets a laugh from me every time for the way he unhurriedly moves a log out of the stagecoach's way). In direct contrast with Monte's tone is Nicholson's plot, which is far from existential. In fact, it could easily be a great rip-snorting episode of *Bonanza*.

From innocent to outlaw

Three cowhands riding together, Wes (Nicholson), Vern (Mitchell), and Otis (Tom Filer), come across a gang of desperadoes holed up in a shack. The desperados have just robbed the local stage and are hiding out. The outlaws figure these saddle tramps want nothing more than to bed down (they're right), so they oblige them. The cowhands put two and two together real fast and figure out these are bad men and "look forward to partin' company with them fellas" in the morning; however, morning brings a posse hellbent on shootin' and hangin' everybody. Filer is shot, and Nicholson and Mitchell escape with the posse hot on their trail. The two men, scared and sorrowful (because of the death of their friend, beautifully conveyed by the way Nicholson just folds up in grief after dismounting from his horse) must now make their way out of the territory on foot, all the while trying to keep two steps ahead of the ever-approaching posse. "If we get some horses we're out of it", Nicholson says.

So to that end they commandeer a ranch tended by an old man (George Mitchell) and his wife (Katherine Squire), and their 19-year-old daughter (Millie Perkins). Holding the family hostage and stealing their stock turns the two innocents into the outlaws the posse believes them to be. One of the truly brilliant things about the movie is Nicholson's sparse and authentic Western dialogue, taken from letters and journals of that time. These are inarticulate people living in simple times using a spare vocabulary. Sometimes this language is funny, as when the three cowhands come across a hanged man and, after looking at him a good long while, Nicholson responds, "Man gets hanged". At other times, it's moving, as when instead of going on and on about how they're innocent and it ain't fair, or how scared they are, Nicholson says to Mitchell on the run, with just the right touch of emotion, "No one's gonna put a name to me and that's it".

Attempts to explain their innocence to



No-nonsense acting: Jack Nicholson in Monte Hellman's great Western, 'Ride in the Whirlwind'

the family fall on deaf ears. This family's existence seems to be a hand-to-mouth one: they live on an ugly, barren piece of dirt away from any other people (when anyone approaches their world, they become threatened). The old man doesn't work a farm, he just chops monotonously all day at a tree stump with an axe. The women just seem to cook grub.

These people have nothing and then these two dangerous outlaws (as they're told earlier by the posse) take what little they have... the old man's dignity (he runs the small shack like a king, but now must let two other men dominate him in his kingdom and rule over his women), and what little they own of value, their stock (horses). It is in the attempts of these two non-verbal men to articulate their innocence and desperation to their innocent and desperate hostages that the film

achieves a rare sorrow. As Mitchell and Nicholson sit at their table after eating their food, and play checkers, as the old man whacks away outside at the formidable stump, Mitchell says, "We borrow their checkers, we steal their horses, there just don't seem to be no end to it". "No use to that", Nicholson replies.

The acting has a strangely eccentric quality. Harry Dean Stanton as the outlaw leader Blind Dick, and Squire and George Mitchell as the old folks are right as rain. When I met Harry Dean Stanton I told him how much I loved *Ride*. He said, "That's the best Western I was ever in, and one of the best I ever saw". But Peter Cannon as a hot-headed outlaw and Millie Perkins give some eccentric line readings. Cannon's voice has a strangely effeminate quality, "I shoulda picked them off original". Perkins' performance is an oddball classic. Her "Yes, we do"

when they ask if she has any checkers has affected the way I say "Yes, I do". But Hellman built the film around the performances of Cameron Mitchell and Jack Nicholson, and it's easy to see why... these two men are terrific.

To see Mitchell, who has since unfortunately gone the way of Aldo Ray (another talented actor of the 50s), appearing in anything, including porno movies, that will pay his price, do the subtle, unmannered, personal work he does here is to shed a tear for all the wonderful actors in film who never had the opportunity to fly where their talent could have taken them. When a fine actor, who has managed to keep his instincts even after appearing in junk for a long time, gets a real role with something to play, a special light goes on in his eyes. You can see it in Martin Landau's performances in *Tucker*, Joe Don Baker's scene-stealing turn in *The Natural*, and Richard Crenna's menacing dinner table conversation in *Body Heat* – all performances in big pictures that stopped or saved those actors from plunging into an exploitation movie hell. That same light shines brightly in Mitchell's eyes throughout *Ride in the Whirlwind*, and it's that light that accounts for what must be the finest performance of his long career.

Star-in-the-making

Jack Nicholson, on the other hand, went on to become one of the biggest stars in the history of movies. Both a great star and a great actor, but more than that, Nicholson has passed over into cultural-icon status like Bogart, John Wayne, James Dean, Marilyn Monroe and Madonna (witness the references to him in Disney's *Aladdin*, and Christian Slater's homage in *Heathers*). Anybody who tunes into *Ride in the Whirlwind* as a curiosity to see the work of a star-in-the-making will be shocked.

Nicholson's work in *Ride* ranks as one of his finest performances, as Robert De Niro's work in *Mean Streets* is one of his finest performances. Not only is Nicholson wonderful as Wes, but he does the kind of no-nonsense meat-and-potatoes work I'd love to see him do again (the closest he's come recently is his work in the much-maligned *The Two Jakes*, which I, for one, loved). Seeing Nicholson play small, after a decade of playing large, reminds us that Nicholson became the icon he is not just by being a great Nicholson, but by being a great actor.

If ever a director was due for critical rediscovery, it would be Monte Hellman. With his naturalistic style and pace, his invisibly punchy editing rhythms, and the journeys his characters inevitably set sail on, his influence can be found in the work of such directors as Hartley, Wim Wenders, Jim Jarmusch, and Terrence Malick (as Pauline Kael noted, though unfavourably, in her review of *Badlands*). This year Monte starts a new film, 'Dark Passion', based on the Lionel White novel *Obsession*. Which Godard used as his jumping-off point for *Pierrot Le Fou*. Movie theatres would be much happier places with a new Monte Hellman movie playing in them.

'When I met Harry Dean Stanton I told him how much I loved "Ride". He said, "That's the best Western I was ever in, and one of the best I ever saw"'

Roads to freedom

Lesley Stern

Cinema, Censorship and the State:

The Writings of Nagisa Oshima

Nagisa Oshima, MIT Press, £31.50, 308pp

"The first films worthy of the name will be those in which every shot incorporates the same level of critique that informs the work as a whole".

To re-use a method is to "surrender to reality", writes Oshima in 1960, signalling a belief in self-negation that permeates both his films and his writing. What makes his *oeuvre* exciting is its radical diversity – every film is different, made differently, made to provoke a different way of seeing. But it is not just the variety that is arresting; it is that each shot is invested with the particular and impassioned critique peculiar to the film as a whole.

This collection of writings (from the mid-50s to the late 70s) does not provide detailed commentary on Oshima's movies, but it does articulate an illuminating philosophy. The writing itself, like the films, is diverse but always lively and engaged with particular issues and audiences, freeing the viewer or reader to reflect more generally and to think more vividly about what matters – in cinema and in life.

"How far can we go beyond naturalism and still permit each existence to stand on

its own?" This is a question that circulates throughout Oshima's work, posing a perennial challenge and stimulus. In a very early polemic – an engagement in public debates about the state of contemporary Japanese cinema – Oshima asserts that "The new work must centre on the vivid desires and actions of people who are grappling with the status quo. They must not depict feeble complexes, shabby emotions, or quiet virtue", and he goes on to discuss how such work has to find new modes of expression. The challenge is to find a way of enabling the unspeakable to be spoken, of liberating those voices which usually are unheard or suppressed, of permitting "each existence to stand on its own" without resorting to methods of depiction that merely reproduce the reality of the status quo. His best-known film, *In the Realm of the Senses*, is an audacious exploration of this dynamic, but the dynamic itself is not new. Oshima's interest in crime, youth, 'aberrant' sexuality, and in those – such as Koreans – who are marginalised or oppressed in modern Japan has been ever-present, manifested in various resistive cinematic strategies.

"To make films is a criminal act in this world". This proclamation comes from an early period when Oshima's writing is fervently combative, but it is more than an expression of youthful rebellion. Resolutely anti-sentimental, Oshima sees resistance not necessarily as glorious and romantic, but as derived from weakness and dispos-

session. Similarly, he sees his own spirit of adventure as a frantic effort to protect or overcome weakness and cowardice. In elaborating such ideas, he produces some intriguing passages, where subjective musings intersect with more theoretical reflections. He seems at times to experience himself (as film-maker) as one of those demonic criminals who enlist his fascination – people who recognise an inner impulse to commit crimes, but don't understand it. It is only, he says, in the process of film production that understanding begins to dawn – understanding of his own desires, and of the more general issues at stake in the film. In this sense, film-making is both an enactment of unconscious (and often prohibited) desires and an act of resistance against repression. Not simply, however, on a personal level. Films exist within the public domain, as does crime; repression exists within the individual psyche and through the regulatory functions of the state. And always there is a connection – albeit convoluted – between the different levels.

"Is sex really an individual matter?", he asks. I once heard him respond to a question about the relation between sex and politics by saying: "People do not talk about politics when they are making love. This is exactly why there is a profound relation". His films are testimony to this combination of conviction and indirectness, or undecidability; they are works of fiction (often based on real events) which elicit an imagi-



Criminal desires:
Oshima's powerful love
story 'In the Realm of the
Senses' explores the
politics of sex and violence

native response, by which I mean that you are incited not only to experience the "vivid desires and actions" of his protagonists, but also to *imagine* connections not depicted and, moreover, to make critical connections. *Violence at Noon* was one of the first Oshima films I saw, and I have seen it only once, but certain images remain, and return to haunt – the startling effect of widescreen close-ups, movement across the frame, the blurring of fantasy and the real, and the very troubling evocation of sexual violence. For me, it is still a film in the making, to be imagined.

Defending *In the Realm of the Senses* (the movie was banned in Japan and charges of obscenity were laid against the book of the film), Oshima opens with a clear indication that he will not buy into the art vs obscenity debate – "I have absolutely no intention of asserting, 'Because this is art it is not obscene'". He ends (after a long and detailed argument, incorporating an overview of the history of censorship and suppression in Japan) by turning to the issue of freedom of expression. "Formerly I prided myself on being an expressive person, but now I am rather ashamed of it... Those who express themselves and their work shine in the light of the lives led by silent people like O-Sada and O-Seki [heroines of *In the Realm of the Senses* and *Empire of Passion*], unable to articulate their difficulties. We must not be confused about the relative importance of freedom of expression. In that sense, I am struggling in this trial to expand freedom of sexual expression, however minimally. But more than that, I am fighting for the freedom of people to see, read, and listen to expressions of sexuality".

Hollow man

Brian Neve

Frank Capra: The Catastrophe of Success
Joseph McBride, Faber and Faber,
£25, 763pp

If Frank Capra gave us the legend in his autobiography *The Name Above the Title*, Joseph McBride unveils a darker side of the American dream – a Sicilian immigrant's rise to fame in 30s Hollywood followed by a sudden decline a decade later. What emerges in this biography is something of a hollow man – insecure, bigoted, ungenerous and fundamentally ill at ease with the independence he professed to desire.

Seven years in the writing, this massive volume leaves no stone unturned. It recounts – sometimes in excessive detail – how Capra became self-consciously American at an early age, distancing himself from his parents and obsessively striving for educational and social advancement. In the mid-20s Capra wrote comedies for Mack Sennett, but as Hal Roach commented, "You'd never take him for a gag man". An early protégé of Harry Langdon – Capra's first film as director was *The Strong Man* (1926) – Capra is said to have hastened Langdon's decline by writing a poison-pen letter about him to a trade paper. But the director's real success came at Columbia Pictures, where he began a crucial but grudgingly acknowledged collaboration with liberal writer Robert Riskin and cameraman Joe Walker.

McBride's study certainly adds to our



Existential angst: James Stewart in 'It's a Wonderful Life', Capra's witty populist critique of the American Way

knowledge of Capra's career by filling in the background to the films that brought him fame and transformed Harry Cohn into a major-league mogul. However, the movies themselves sometimes threaten to disappear under the weight of descriptions of pressures and influences. Capra's middle period is seen as owing much of its New Deal ethos to the liberal and left writers he needed to connect his fantasies to the real concerns of Depression America; Capra himself is revealed as a lifelong Republican whose hostility to Roosevelt softened only during the Hollywood anti-fascism of the late 30s.

McBride tends to refer to critical debates only in passing. Interesting ideas – that Riskin may be the true auteur of Capra's work, for instance, or the notion of "post-war sexist ideology" – are raised, but not engaged with analytically. He doffs his cap in the direction of those who see Capra as a populist, looking backwards to a pre-industrial golden age, and he also traces autobiographical influences in the movies. Though critical of auteurist approaches, surprisingly McBride fails to come to grips with Raymond Carney's arguments in *American Vision* that the recurrent motifs in Capra's work are metaphors for more central questions about the testing of individual will. For Carney, Capra's dramatisations of existential problems place him in a US pantheon headed by William James. To McBride, Capra's winning formula was a product of his immigrant insecurity – his view of himself as both common man and American success story – aided by the constructions of writers, critics and the Depression audience.

After his army service, during which he supervised wartime propaganda films, Capra returned to Hollywood and joined George Stevens and William Wyler in forming Liberty Films, an idealistic but short-

lived independent venture. As Capra becomes increasingly wary of the left and liberal associations that had contributed to his earlier success, McBride's story takes on a darker tone. While John Ford had the Western, Capra's formula seemed increasingly played out after *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946). Criticising the reality of American life by praising the ideal became more difficult to carry off as the blacklist and Cold War made Hollywood suspicious of social content. McBride quotes Capra ranting about having to clear an actor he wanted for *It's a Wonderful Life* with "that awful prick", John Wayne.

Making use of new primary sources, and the uncut version of Capra's highly inaccurate autobiography, McBride shows that, as well as being a victim of HUAC – he failed a security clearance in 1951 – Capra also acted as an informer for both the FBI and the State Department as he became desperate to assert his patriotism. Capra lost both confidence and self-respect, and spent much of the remainder of his time either trying to forget or reconstructing his life as myth.

McBride provides valuable insight into the influence of Hollywood politics on Capra's life, and powerfully suggests that these constraints contributed to his success. Cut off from liberal and left writers, he lost relevance, and his anti-communist work for the government in the 50s was a sign of defeat, much like George Bailey's resignation to the limitations of small-town life at the end of *It's a Wonderful Life*. Capra became all things to all people; cited in support of Reagan's right-wing populism in the 80s, he was also seen by Costa-Gavras as "the inspiration for every political film-maker".

McBride's grand design does not always fit with his discussion of the films, and perhaps leads him to underestimate Capra's immediately post-war work. In combat- ▶

◀ ting what he sees as the myths of Capra and the American dream and of Capra the auteur, he may swing too far the other way. However, his book is a valuable step towards demystification.

Disappearing worlds

Michael Eaton

Film As Ethnography

Peter I. Crawford and David Turton (eds), Manchester University Press, £40 (hb), £17.50 (pb), 322pp

The last major collection on the relationship between film and anthropology (*Principles of Visual Anthropology*, edited by Paul Hockings) was produced in 1975. The present volume can be seen as a demonstration not only of the changes that have taken place in Social Anthropology during the intervening years, but also as an indicator that a species of film theory generated in France in the 70s has found a favourable, if temporary, domicile in the social sciences. Those who regret the passing of 'the moment of theory' would be well advised to consult this book; in the best contributions, issues of cinematic and televisual representation come face to face with problems of documentary ethics.

The attitudes of anthropologists towards film expressed in the earlier collection could be crudely summarised as follows: there were those who saw film as an unproblematic reflection of reality, entirely appropriate to anthropology's endeavour, and there were others who viewed the 'evidence' captured by the camera as a threat to the discipline, something which should be subordinated to anthropology's authority as a science.

The work of a few film-makers implicitly challenged these views. In the US, for example, Timothy Asch's films problematised the ethical implications of the spectators' relationship with the alien and exotic Other, while Robert Gardner moved towards an aestheticised auteurism which wilfully shrugged off the strictures imposed by anthropological colleagues. And in France, Jean Rouch delighted in producing films that were constructions rather than reflections of reality, revelling in the prospect of his presence as a film-maker affecting the events he was filming. However, the written material displayed no sophisticated consideration of issues of cinematic representation, narrativity, the construction of reality, the mechanics of spectatorship and the audience – all matters which absorbed film theorists at the time Hockings' volume appeared.

Since then, anthropology has been through a process of self-reflection and (dare one say it?) deconstruction. The very title of this collection reflects that process. For what is posited here is not the name of a discipline (anthropology) but of a practice (ethnography). In recent years, ethnography itself has been reconceptualised: no longer the objective basis of a science, it can be seen as a genre of writing which arises out of an encounter between the observer and the observed. Ethnography is considered to be both bound by convention and subjective. Film, then, takes its place as

ethnography, rather than as an adjunct or threat to it.

The range of issues discussed in this present volume is exemplary, spanning examinations of the way anthropological authority is challenged by cinematic conventions, through questions of documentary aesthetics, through issues of the politics and ethics of representation, ending with surveys and case studies of anthropology and the broadcasting institutions. This latter section is probably most amenable to the general reader, containing *inter alia* a useful overview by André Singer and an extremely honest appraisal by David Turton of his role as ethnographic adviser for the four films by Leslie Woodhead of the Mursi of south-western Ethiopia for Granada's *Disappearing World*. He concludes: "I am asking for such programmes to be presented more as encounters than observations, more as dialogues *with* than dialogues *about* people. This would require a willingness, on the part of both anthropologists and programme-maker to dismantle the protective walls behind which they are used to hiding from the public gaze". If this volume is anything to go by, the first steps towards this goal have now been taken.

Out to lunch

Robert Murphy

Albert Finney In Character

Quentin Falk, Robson Books, £16.95, 244pp

Introducing his new book, Quentin Falk cites another reviewer's dismissal of star biographies as "a slavish expression of an empty consensus... avoiding serious judgment in favour of servile documentation". He promises to do better than this, recounting his determination to get his subject's involvement in the work. By page two, however, Finney has declined to co-operate and Falk is reduced to banality. "Friends say that he has two distinct personalities: one direct and friendly; the next complicated and guarded. He is a Northerner". The mysteries shrouding this enigmatic Northerner are hardly great: why hasn't he been knighted, why did he decline to appear on *Desert Island Discs*, and how did he avoid having to do National Service?

Fortunately, the book improves once Falk gets on with the documentation, which is tactful rather than servile. As befits an ex-editor of *Screen International*, he draws on his industry contacts, exhorting them to reveal what they know of the elusive Finney as he flits between stage and film set, racecourse and restaurant. The accounts vary in quality, from Sheridan Morley's irrelevant chit-chat about Finney's relationship with Peter Bull ("Peter was deeply gay... Peter was deeply in love with Albert... and... saw in Albert, I think, a sort of native courage he also deeply admired") to Alan Parker's sardonic "He was once the most brilliant actor in the whole world and then became someone who enjoyed lunch more than acting".

Falk's biography consists mostly of a chronological account of Finney's acting roles, from the Mayor of Ratville in a junior school play to Sergeant Hegarty in the recent *The Playboys*. One film or play follows another, eliding the substantial gaps between performances. Between 1971 and



The playboy: enigmatic actor Albert Finney defies all attempts to pin him down

1981 there was only Hercule Poirot in *Murder on the Orient Express* and a couple of walk-on parts; between *Under the Volcano* (1984) and *Miller's Crossing* (1991) only a filmed play. Falk discreetly mentions Finney's "ambition by-pass", but his method does not allow him to explain it. He gives only rudimentary details about Finney's marriages and serious liaisons, and the anecdotes from interviewees about the actor's kindness, generosity and professionalism are strangely uniform. Only Alan Parker is pugnacious enough to insist on Finney's indolence and complacency.

There are hints that Finney is more than this. His support for controversial projects like Lindsay Anderson's *If...*, Mike Leigh's *Bleak Moments* and Brian Friel's play about Bloody Sunday, *The Freedom of the City*, suggests that he might be less conservative than other 60s icons such as Sean Connery and Michael Caine, and more dangerous than burnt-out hell-raisers Peter O'Toole and Richard Harris. Certainly his choice of film roles since *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (*Night Must Fall*, *Charlie Bubbles*, *Gumshoe*, *Wolfen*, *Shoot the Moon*, *Under the Volcano*, *Miller's Crossing*) is more idiosyncratic and interesting than theirs. He has made bad choices too, but it is only in recent efforts like the television production *The Green Man* and *The Playboys* that a definite soggyiness has set in.

This is a disappointingly dull book for such a colourful subject. Finney emerges as a horse-lover who enjoys acting the kindly uncle to his less well-off colleagues. This might be enough for Mr Falk and the Home Counties, but we Northerners are used to a bit more grit.

The best years

Sean Day-Lewis

Done Viewing

Philip Purser, Quartet Books, £14.95, 275pp

During the 70s and beyond, while I went on about the telly in the *Daily Telegraph*, Philip Purser wrote an elegant and erudite TV column for the *Sunday Telegraph*. I was new to the field and inclined to be enthusiastic about work which seemed to me distinctive, innovative, non-derivative, non-imitative and all the other words presently brandished on behalf of the Birtist, not to say Marmaducal, BBC. Whenever I became foolishly carried away I could always be sure of a Purser correction on Sunday, gently pointing out precisely when this or that screen idea had been more successfully applied.

Philip Purser, who had been reviewing TV for various Fleet Street organs since 1955, was one of those rare critics who knew and cared about the use and abuse of the medium. He also had a good memory or filing system: most likely, both. When the *Sunday Telegraph* was launched in 1961, its donnish first editor, Donald McLachlan, invited political writer T. E. Utley to write the TV review column. It was thought that Utley, being blind, would be able to concentrate on the content without being distracted by the pictures. When this idea broke down, Purser was hired, an afterthought who was to remain in place for twenty-six years.

It is a minor disappointment of his

urbane and amusing memoir, sub-titled 'A personal account of the best years of our television', that Purser does not indulge in any sustained assault on the attitudes with which the masters of Fleet Street faced television during this period: seeing it simultaneously as a rich news source, a base infested with the pink-tinted enemy within, and a joke.

Though Purser worked effectively against the grain of this cynicism, through his own best years, he eventually became one of its victims. In 1987 a careless new *Telegraph* broom ruled that he should be 'allowed to go' and so he did, only to be replaced by a string of reviewers simply not in his league. After a final two years at the *Daily Mail*, as second string to an inferior chief critic, he was dismissed by editor, Sir David English, on the grounds that he, like the number-one man himself, was not a woman.

Curiously, it was the *Mail* that had first demonstrated, through its renowned columnist Peter Black, that newspaper reviewing of television could be a serious and useful activity. As the most successful of Black's disciples, Purser achieved a similarly entertaining mix of constructive response. Humour was used as one of several tools, but was not the be-all and end-all of his craftsmanship. Nancy Banks-Smith in the *Guardian* and, briefly, Clive James in the *Observer* proved more influential in their effect on the fraternity of broadsheet editors. But they were misread. Unlike their inferior imitators, they also knew and cared about their subject.

In his summing-up chapter, Purser records a homily I once received from *Observer* editor Donald Treford, to the effect that some critics (like Purser) wrote for the trade while those he preferred served "the punters". Answering this, Purser argues that, as far as he is concerned, "a critic writes for his or her readers, and no one else... but that does not excuse him or her from being well-informed and at least a little interested in the subject". Sadly this is no longer as true as it used to be. Nowadays, TV critics who wish to keep their jobs must write primarily for the editors who have the power to hire and fire.

In the end, perhaps Purser adopted some of the political or social attitudes of the right-wing papers that employed him. Certainly he refrains from anything but glancing blows at the vindictive and destructive Thatcherite dogma used to ensure that, as far as possible, "the best years of our television" will end with the 90s. In spite of this, Purser's book essentially shows him to be an independent and open-minded sceptic who has never succumbed easily to any shade of received opinion. He writes, for instance, of Hugh Greene occupying "a place of especial suspicion in the *Telegraph* demonology and therefore special esteem in my pantheon".

"Was it all a waste of time, thirty-odd years I spent watching and nagging?", Purser finally asks himself. His book answers the question in style. His recognition of quality, and his dismissal of the meretricious, are seen to have made their contribution to "the best years". His campaigns, such as the plea that television drama should not be imitation cinema (or theatre) but itself, deserve more attention than they have received.

Great and good

Ginette Vincendeau

Jean Renoir: Projections of Paradise

Ronald Bergan, Bloomsbury, £17.99, 372pp

"The greatest of all directors" (Orson Welles). "The greatest film-maker in the world" (François Truffaut). These superlatives, quoted on the jacket of Ronald Bergan's book on Jean Renoir, inform its approach. Bergan also espouses the view of André Bazin and early *Cahiers du cinéma* that with true auteurs, the biographical merges with the filmic. Many books on Renoir's films – for instance, those by Leo Braudy, Raymond Durgnat and Alexandre Sesonske – follow this line, and Renoir himself has substantially contributed to the formation of his 'legend' with *Renoir, My Father and My Life and My Films*, as well as collected letters, interviews and essays. Thus Bergan's claim that his is the first full-scale biography of Renoir written in English is both strictly true and not entirely candid. It also conveniently bypasses Célia Bertin's excellent biography published in French in 1986, now translated into English.

Bergan clearly went to considerable lengths to track down Renoir's relatives and friends. This does not, however, make up for his endorsement of the most clichéd aspects of the Renoir myth. Among these is the legacy of his Impressionist painter father – "[he] drank deeply of his father's pantheism", and so on. Auguste Renoir's significance becomes, in Bergan's book, tautological. Renoir père is both the point of origin of his son's creativity and the end result of his film ("He was to come much closer to his father's vision by painting with the camera").

A more interesting angle is suggested by the remark of Jean Renoir's first wife,

A legend in his time: was Jean Renoir driven by a fear of failure inherited from his Impressionist painter father?



Catherine Hessling, that "[Auguste] was so afraid that Jean would be a failure... it was Jean's fear of failure that struck me". Hessling may be biased, since Jean left her when his career took off with *La Chienne*, but must be less so than Bergan (and his sources) are towards her. She was, we are told, not only a bad actress, ambitious, frivolous and promiscuous, but also a bad mother. Fortunately, after Marguerite Houllé-Renoir, his editor-companion during the 30s, Jean found Dido, his Brazilian second wife, a self-effacing woman happy to devote her life to him.

Bergan is similarly conventional when it comes to assessing Renoir's cinematic technique and status, casting him as a director dedicated to artistic freedom, whose films "would be committed to higher ideals than the making of money" (there is no mention here of the inherited wealth which facilitated such aspirations). Along with a few other lofty individuals – Renoir père, von Stroheim and Chaplin – Renoir is presented as a genius who struggled against "the quicksands of Hollywood conventions", unconnected to French cinematic tradition.

The book includes a filmography, a short bibliography and an index, and is sparsely illustrated. Spelling and editing of French words leave something to be desired – particularly the bizarre and inaccurate information that *French Cancan* is pronounced "Franche Concon" by the French.

Down market down under

Steven Barnett

Rupert Murdoch

William Shawcross, Chatto and Windus, £18.99, 616pp

The charge against this book – made most vigorously by Frances Wheen and echoed by others – is that William Shawcross "went native". Despite his reputation for robust and independent writing, he was seduced during his five years of research into the Murdoch phenomenon by the charm and energy of his subject.

His book is certainly not a hostile portrait. There is more than a hint of admiration in Shawcross' description of the Wapping revolution, the clandestine operation that preceded the mass sacking of printers, and the sense of liberation felt by many journalists and all proprietors. And there are times – in the accounts of the launch of his American Fox network, of Sky TV, of the *Australian* newspaper – when the spirit of a freewheeling, gambling buccaneer takes precedence over less sympathetic possible interpretations.

But this is no panegyric either. Throughout the book, particularly when it deals with the early stages of empire accumulation, there are detailed and unflattering accounts of the bullying, deceit, manipulation and broken promises which characterised Murdoch's acquisitive programme. There are also graphic accounts of how newspapers and television stations have been, with rare exceptions, driven relentlessly down-market in order to raise circulation and viewing figures.

Three themes are discernible. First is the contempt Murdoch has demonstrated ►

◀ for governments, regulations or 'independent' directors who seek to protect the public interest in the cultural industries. The Australian Broadcasting Tribunal, the Federal Communications Commission in the US, the directors of *The Times* and the old Independent Broadcasting Authority in the UK have all fallen victim to the Murdoch determination to steamroller restrictions on media ownership. They have invariably been outsmarted or – more dangerously – have allowed themselves to be beguiled by assurances of benign intent.

When Murdoch is forced to concede, he wreaks revenge. Shawcross presents us with a penetrating account of how desperate Murdoch was to keep the *New York Post* as well as his newly acquired television station in New York. This was prohibited by FCC regulations, but a series of waivers and delaying tactics allowed him to hang on. When Senator Edward Kennedy finally defeated him with a Senate amendment, the Murdoch titles were set loose and took every opportunity to raise the spectre of Chappaquiddick.

The second theme is Murdoch's aversion to serious investigative or challenging journalism. He is contemptuous of those who seek to expose corruption or wrongdoing in high places and, says Shawcross, "believed that Watergate-type investigations were not the purpose of journalism". His brand of journalism is aimed at the soft target, the private citizen who has little protection against the ravages of a tabloid press.

Shawcross remarks on the determination of Murdoch's wife, Anna, to protect her family's privacy, and does not ignore the irony: "They were able to protect themselves much more effectively than the victims of her husband's papers". When Murdoch does attempt to upset the established order, it is again soft targets which bear the brunt: the monarchy, the BBC, but nothing which might require an investment of resources in detailed investigation or committed campaigning.

Thirdly, there is his political fundamentalism and the enormous influence he wields throughout the world. The message is an unequivocal, arch-Conservative ideology which Murdoch delivers – as one of his ex-editors succinctly put it – "by phone and by clone". It is rabidly free market, unapologetically anti-gay, often fascist, and is reinforced with annual meetings at Aspen, Colorado where the loyal lieutenants are – in Shawcross' words – "fitted out with uniforms..., inspired and invigorated and sent back to their commands filled... with renewed loyalty to their commander in chief".

This book reveals how the political power wielded through Murdoch's editors has helped to shore up the ideological right in all three of his operating continents. News Corporation did not just epitomise the 80s, but helped to create the mood of the Reagan-Thatcher era: selfish, brash, and deaf to society's failures.

Shawcross' final pages are an unconvincing attempt at fence-sitting. Nevertheless, in 600 eminently readable pages, he has amassed a body of evidence which demonstrates the awesome level of influence exercised by one man in an increasingly information-driven world. That this portrait is presented in a neutral, slightly adulatory, tone makes it all the more chilling.

Readers digest

Martin Davidson

Reading Ads Socially

Robert Goldman, Routledge, £13.99, 247pp

Reading Ads Socially tells us that perfume ads can be sexist, ads for McDonald's have a lot of schmaltz, and it is characteristic of hegemonic discourse to self-reflexively reconstitute itself in commodified acts of interpretative sublation (i.e. Coke Is It). It's that language problem again, where academic jargon leads to bathos.

There are two tests for this genre of social studies media analysis. The first is to count the number of times the author quotes undigested chunks of Judith Williamson's influential *Decoding Advertisements*. Robert Goldman does so thirty-five times, not as a springboard to new ideas that have emerged in the past fifteen years, but in obeisance to the Ur-text. The second is the Rubik's Cube test. That is, construct a paragraph by combining the fifth sentence (or ninth, or thirty-first) from five consecutive pages to see if it makes any difference:

"Escalating emphasis on the symbolic properties or psychological utility of goods represents a qualitative change in the commodity form. The commodity form universalises social relations. The dance of commodities begins as commodity self encounters commodity self. A commodity must enter into formal relationship of equivalence with other commodities. Money facilitates commodification because it serves as a universal economic equivalent to express the value of all other commodities". The last two sentences follow one another, while the first three are plucked at random; but they make as much sense in this, or any other order.

The practical criticism of individual ads does lighten the gloom a little. The book attempts to analyse the way in which the infinite number of social values available to an advertiser is only ever used to promote a single idea, namely the indispensability of the product and, in a larger context, the indispensability of capitalism. An example would be the co-opting of feminism from politics and turning it into lifestyle 'brand' values, thereby sanitising the threat posed to patriarchy and capitalism. The author is preoccupied with the paradox (or self-contradiction) that haunts advertising, whereby companies must use the quicksilver tricks of persuasion because they cannot coerce us to buy their products. This attempt to control the uncontrollable offers up a political parallel; both democracy and advertising offer the illusion of participation and reciprocity of the individual. This in turn confirms the contention that advertising is "hegemonic", that is, up to its neck in lubricating the smooth operation of individual-crushing capitalism.

Most advertisements work on an implicit level; as texts they deliberately appear transparent and undermotivated. Consequently, they are ripe for interpretation and deconstruction; their possible meanings extend way beyond themselves. Goodman's book achieves the reverse; with its larded prose, its turgid structure, its woeful over-explicitness, it ends up, perversely, offering the thinnest of reads.

shorts

The Scorsese Picture:

The Art and Life of Martin Scorsese

David Ehrenstein, Birch Lane Press, \$30, 254pp

Lavishly illustrated with rare black-and-white photographs and production stills from Scorsese's private archives, this volume is more than the coffee-table picture book it appears to be. Detailed critical analysis of key movies combined with interview material and commentary by the director himself build up a fascinating perspective on his complex, multi-layered movies and on his working methods. The last chapter offers a fly-on-the-wall glimpse of editor Thelma Schoonmaker and Scorsese completing *Cape Fear*. The book also includes a comprehensive filmography that lists TV commercials and unrealised projects.

West of Everything: The Inner Life of Westerns

Jane Tompkins, Oxford University Press, £15, 245pp

Literary critic Tompkins takes a personal look at Western novels and movies, probing the myths of masculinity they work through. She maintains that Westerns originated as a reaction against popular women's novels and women's invasion of the public sphere, as men attempted to reclaim cultural territory from sentimental domestic literature. A lively, provocative and sympathetic book, somewhat marred by limiting its arguments to too narrow a range of films.

The Cinema in France: After the New Wave

Jill Forbes, Macmillan/BFI, £12.99, 337pp

A study of contemporary French cinema which sets out to demonstrate the richness and variety of art film, discussing the work of eleven post-*Nouvelle Vague* film-makers, among them Agnès Varda, Marguerite Duras, Philippe Garrel, Maurice Pialat, André Techiné and Bertrand Blier. Forbes argues that these auteurs share a desire to change cinema rather than society, a perspective intimately linked to the events of May '68. The book includes filmographies and a bibliography.

Hollywood's Overseas Campaign:

The North Atlantic Movie Trade, 1920-1950

Ian Jarvie, Cambridge University Press, £40, 473pp

Jarvie examines how Hollywood movies became one of the most successful US exports after the First World War. Focusing on Canada and the UK, he shows how resistance to US cultural invasion was largely motivated by special interest groups who considered themselves entitled to some of the profits of the Hollywood industry. These efforts failed because of lack of capital, mismanagement and audience resistance. Jarvie has trawled a mass of primary material to produce this fascinating history.

Missing Believed Lost:

The Great British Film Search

Allen Eyles and David Meeker (eds), BFI Publishing, £14.95, 107pp

The National Film Archive's selection of 100 British movies which have 'gone missing' and which the NFA would like to retrieve and preserve. They range from Michael Powell's twelve 'quota quickies' to Errol Flynn's first film appearance in Britain and three early Bernard Vorhaus features. This beautifully produced volume is a plea to collectors everywhere to unlock their cupboards and scour their shelves in the interests of recovering and preserving our national cinematic heritage.

Walter Forde in 'What Next?', one of the missing British gems sought by the National Film Archive



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Arthur Nollletti, Jr., and David Desser (eds.)

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REVIEWS

Reviews, synopses and full credits for all the month's new films

Bad Lieutenant

USA 1992

Director: Abel Ferrara

Certificate
18

Distributor
Guild Films

Production Company
Pressman Films

Executive Producers
Ronna B. Wallace
Patrick Wachsberger

Producers
Edward R. Pressman
Mary Kane

Co-producer
Randall Sabusawa

Line Producer
Diana Phillips

Production Supervisor
Peter Pastorelli

Production Co-ordinator
Jennifer Roth

Unit Production Manager
Diana Phillips

Unit Manager
Denis Hann

Location Manager
Tony Kono

Casting
New York:
Meredith Jacobson

Los Angeles:
Kimba Hills

Extras:
Laura Gillis

Assistant Directors
Drew Rosenberg
Noga Isackson

Screenplay
Zoe Lund
Abel Ferrara

Director of Photography
Ken Kelsch

In colour

24 Frame Playback

Equipment
Howard Weiner

Video Playback Operator
Tom Zafian

Editor
Anthony Redman

Production Designer
Charles Lagola

Set Decorator
Stephanie Carroll

Set Dressers
Robert Covelman

Additional:
Diane Lederman

Music
Joe Delia

Costume Design
David Sanaryn

Wardrobe Supervisors
Winsome McKoy

Anita Ellis

Make-up Artist
Joe Cuervo

Supervising Sound Editor
Gonzo

Sound Editors
Clancy Troutman

Jim Koford

Dennis Dutton

Alan Shultz

Randy Tomlin

Foley Editor
Chuck Simmons

Sound Recordists
Michael Barosky

Foley:
Albert Gomez

Sound Re-recordists
Tom Ruff

James Williams

Foley Artists
Casey Crabtree

Bess Steele

Baseball Adviser
Josh Blum

Production Assistants
Art Department:

Rachel Talbot

Matt Galvin

Erik Ferrar

Key Set:
Roni Ben-Nevat

Set:
Mike Tracey

Jennifer Taback

Peter Millerman

Wendy Damon

Dave Burns

Los Angeles:
Lori Gottlieb

Grace Griffith

Bruce Hofert

Daniel Posener

Stunts
Phil Nelson

Cast
Harvey Keitel

Lieutenant

Brian McElroy

Frankie Acclario

Lieutenant's Sons

Peggy Gormley

Lieutenant's Wife

Stella Keitel

Lieutenant's Daughter

Victor Argo

Bet Cop

Paul Calderone

Leonard Thomas

Cops

Anthony Ruggiero

Lite

Shawn McLean

John Steven Jones

Black Kids

Vincent Laresca

JC

Robin Burrows

Ariane

Victoria Bastell

Bowtrey

G. Elvis Phillips

Young Cop

Stephen Chen

Korean Store Owner

Fernando Velez

Julio

Joseph Michael Cruz

Paulo

Frankie Thorn

Nun

Frank Adonis

Large

Paul Hipp

Jesus

Lambert Moss

Veronica

Nicholas DeCegli

Limelight Guide

Larry Mullane

Mike Fella

Mike Ciravolo

Detectives

Zoe Lund

Zoe

Bo Diell

Detective Bo

Gene Canfield

Irish Cop

Heather Bracken

Nurse

Penny Allen

Doctor

Eddie Daniels

Jersey Girl/Passenger

Bianca Bakila

Jersey Girl/Driver

Ed Kovens

Monsignor

Jamie Sanchez

Priest

Minnie Gentry

Elderly Woman

Iraida Polanco

Momacita

John Cloghessy

Chris "Mad Dog" Russo

Voice Over Announcers

Warner Fusselle

Play by Play Announcer

8,647 feet

96 minutes

The Bad Lieutenant works for the NYPD. His addiction to crack, heroin and alcohol have led him into debt, from which he hopes to escape by betting on the Dodgers baseball team in the National Championship Series. When the Dodgers lose a key game, the Lieutenant is unable to settle his debts and persuades his bookie instead to double his stakes for the next game. The Lieutenant takes out his frustration by sexually harassing female members of the public, and getting high with a junkie girlfriend. When a nun is beaten and raped in a local church by two young thugs who also steal holy sacraments, a reward of \$50,000 offered by the Catholic mafia lures the Lieutenant. He pursues the nun, and overhears her holy confession in which she reveals that she knows the identity of her assailants. But the nun refuses to answer questions about their identity, preferring to forgive them for their crime. Incensed by her intransigence, and ravaged with despair, the Lieutenant collapses before the church's altar, and is visited by a vision of Christ. Emerging from his stupor, he wakes to find an old woman returning to the church the golden chalice stolen during the rape. She leads him to a nearby housing project where he confronts the rapists; on television, the Mets/Dodgers game, on which the Lieutenant's hopes rest, begins. The Lieutenant shares a pipe of crack with his prisoners before delivering them to the downtown bus station and putting them on a coach out of town, making them swear never to return to New York. The Lieutenant drives to a rendezvous with his bookie as the game reaches a climax: Dodgers hero Strawberry is at bat, and could win the game with a home run. As the ball is played, the Lieutenant is shot dead from a passing car.

After the relative gloss of *The King of New York*, this terrifyingly powerful film seems at first glance to mark a return to Ferrara's early days as an underground film-maker. Like *The Driller Killer*, the style of *Bad Lieutenant* is ragged and punky: from the opening credits, consisting of harsh typeface crudely emblazoned upon a blank background with no accompanying theme music, Ferrara deliberately distances his latest film from the cosy conventions of the mainstream. Extensive use of a hand-held camera and numerous sparsely edited sequences create a documentary-like quality reminiscent of the director's long-banned debut.

Similar too is the unresolved narrative which sets up wrong-doers for punishment, but then denies the audience the cathartic release of seeing them put to justice. Just as *The Driller Killer* ends with a haunting close-up on the eye of the giant bull painted by the unpunished murderer (we are left, as Martin Barker points out, "in the eye of the storm"), so *Bad Lieutenant* frustrates the desire for closure by allowing the rapists to go free. The satisfying black satire of the rape-revenge cult hit *Ms. 45/Angel of Vengeance* (devised by and



Incensed: Harvey Keitel

starring *Bad Lieutenant* co-writer Zoe Tamerlis, aka Lund) is entirely absent here. Instead, the audience is deliberately left disorientated and uneasy.

It is ironic therefore that, despite such an apparently disruptive format, *Bad Lieutenant* has a classical narrative more akin to Ferrara's reworking of Romeo and Juliet in *China Girl* than to any of his other less mainstream films. While the structure and style hark back to the amorality of Ferrara's earliest work, the story itself is almost biblical, an unashamed tale of the redemption, via divine intervention, of one who has fallen from grace. Throughout the film, the Lieutenant punctuates his sins (drug taking, sexual harassment, stealing, cheating, avarice) with mournful pleas for God to save his miserable soul. In one sequence, played to the hilt by Keitel in a shockingly brilliant performance, the drug-addled cop stands naked before the camera, arms outstretched in Christ-like pose, howling like a dog begging to be put down. Only when he subjugates himself before the altar is redemption finally offered, in the shape of the chalice which Jesus himself appears to deliver. Empowered by this grail, and led by the nun's example, the Lieutenant performs a single, saving act of forgiveness, made all the more worthy by the pain which this act causes him. Thus redeemed, he is swiftly removed from the horrors of earthly life, shot dead by a bullet which could itself be interpreted as divinely driven.

The extreme religious orthodoxy of such a narrative may give Ferrara fans cause for concern, for despite the on-screen depravity (it is hard to imagine a more hideous spectacle than that of the Lieutenant mouthing obscenities while frenziedly masturbating over two young female offenders), *Bad Lieutenant* is ultimately a paean to the virtues of true Catholicism. Like *The Exorcist*, the film frequently seems to revel in obscenity, but remains draped throughout in the pious clothing of the priesthood. Small wonder, then, that the BBFC have passed *Bad Lieutenant* uncut, for although it is visually visceral, its narrative heart is palatably spiritual. Meanwhile, *The Driller Killer*, which almost ten years ago was declared obscene on video-tape by the DPP, still awaits certification.

Mark Kermode

Damage

United Kingdom/France 1992

Director: Louis Malle

Certificate

18

Distributor

Entertainment
Production Companies
Skreba (London)/
NEF/Le Studio Canal
Plus (Paris)
In association with
Channel 4/European
Co-Production Fund

Producer

Louis Malle

Co-producers

Vincent Malle

Simon Relp

Production Co-ordinator

Janine Lodge

Production Managers

Donna Grey

France:

Jean Yves Asselin

Location Managers

Rachel Neale

France:

Stephanie Seilhean

Casting

Patsy Pollock

Assistant Directors

Michel Ferry

Cordelia Hardy

Jolyon Symonds

Screenplay

David Hare

Based on the novel by

Josephine Hart

Director of Photography

Peter Biziou

Colour

Technicolor

Camera Operators

Mike Proudfoot

France:

Marc Konninckx

Steadicam Operator

Marc Konninckx

Opticals

Chris King

Editor

John Bloom

Production Designer

Brian Morris

Art Directors

Richard Earl

France:

Philippe Turlure

Set Decorators

Jill Quertier

France:

Michel Grimaud

Music

Zbigniew Preisner

Music Director

Woscich Michniewski

Music Performed By

Synfonia Varsovia

Costume Design

Milena Canonero

Wardrobe Supervisor

Richard Pointing

Chief Make-up Artists

Linda Devetta

Louise Constad

Titles

Mike Dempsey

Sound Editor

Eddy Joseph

Sound Recordist

Jean-Claude Laureux

Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recordist

Robin O'Donoghue

Cast

Jeremy Irons

Stephen Fleming

Juliette Binoche

Anna Barton

Miranda Richardson

Ingrid Fleming

Rupert Graves

Martyn Fleming

Leslie Caron

Elizabeth Prideaux

Ian Bannen

Edward Lloyd

Gemma Clarke

Sally Fleming

Peter Stormare

Peter

Julian Fellowes

Donald Lindsay

Roger Llewellyn

Palmer

Susan Engel

Miss Snow

Raymond Gravell

Raymond

Jeff Nuttall

Trevor Leigh Davies

Jason Morrell

Young Man at Sothebys

Barry Stearn

Prime Minister's Aide

Tony Doyle

Prime Minister

Linda Delapena

Beth

Henry Power

Henry

Francine Stock

TV Interviewer

Benjamin Whitrow

Civil Servant

David Thewlis

Detective

Simon De Deney

Young Man at DTI

Luc Etienne

Lutetia Receptionist

10,015 feet

111 minutes

Dr Stephen Fleming is a successful Conservative junior minister who is secure in his family life with his wife Ingrid, journalist son Martyn and younger daughter Sally. He meets Martyn's new girlfriend Anna Barton at a party and they are immediately attracted; but when Martyn brings Anna to meet his parents, she and Stephen pretend they have never met. At a dinner to celebrate Martyn's promotion on his newspaper, Anna describes her brother Aston's suicide. Later, Anna tells Stephen that Aston killed himself over his love for her, a fact that explains her fear of possessiveness. Stephen leaves a conference in Brussels and takes a train to Paris to see Anna, who is staying in a hotel there with Martyn; she joins him and they make love in a doorway.

Back in London, Stephen tells Anna he will leave Ingrid, but she refuses to end her relationship with Martyn, though she wants their affair to continue. At her flat, Stephen encounters Peter, a former lover of Anna's who made love with her the night Aston died. At the country house of Ingrid's father Edward, a veteran politician, Martyn and Anna announce their engagement; that night, Stephen sneaks into Anna's bedroom, but is spotted by Sally. Anna's mother Elizabeth visits the family and remarks on Martyn's resemblance to Aston. Aware of Stephen's feelings for Anna, she warns him to step aside. Afraid the affair is about to end, Stephen is increasingly depressed and cannot even become excited at the prospect of a position as Minister of Health.

Anna sends him a key to a flat, where he finds a message arranging an assignation with her. On the eve of the wedding, Stephen and Anna make love in the flat, but are interrupted by Martyn, who has accidentally discovered the address. Backing away in shock, Martyn falls over the banisters and is killed; as Stephen rushes down to his son's body, Anna slips away. Rejected by a furious Ingrid, Stephen resigns. He visits Elizabeth, who tells him she tried to warn him, and finds that Anna is hiding in her hotel room. Later, Stephen is living alone in a small French town, reminded of his past only by a blown-up photograph of himself, Anna and Martyn.

In his recent book of interviews *Malle on Malle*, Louis Malle insists that although his films seem to have no common signature, there is a unifying thread: the commitment and personal investment he puts into them. With *Damage*, however, that thread has worn thin: this is worse even than Malle's creaking caper *Crackers*, which at least refused to take itself seriously. What is more, to all intents and purposes, *Damage* is thematically and visually a David Hare film.

Hare's adaptation of Josephine Hart's slim but portentous airport paperback is very much of a piece with his *Strapless* and *Paris By Night* – a state-of-the-nation Euro-romance that has very little to do with the state of any

recognisable nation but allows him much scope to tut-tut about how the other half loves. Stephen Fleming does what Hare's Conservative Euro-MP did in *Paris By Night* – he goes AWOL from his daily business in the cause of grand passion, and comes a cropper as a result. Where his Paris flit is plausibly presented in the book, in the film he goes spectacularly over the edge, checking into the lovers' hotel and gasping in anguish at the sight of them enjoying breakfast together.

Hart's doggedly aphoristic prose style provides few cues for visual elaboration, and the main innovation here is to translate Stephen's first-person narrative into Jeremy Irons' worried expression. Irons should have had his fill of playing self-aware literary agonisers – his Stephen is a composite of similar suckers for amour fou in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, *Swann in Love* and *Waterland*. It is a lazy piece of casting – Irons is too young for the part, too much the matinee idol to suggest a dogged Tory thrown off course.

Binoche is little better, an improbably French incarnation of Anna, presumably chosen to imbue the part with European exoticism. Anna is an all-purpose *femme fatale* desperately conscious of her status, with the result that it is difficult to perceive her anything other than a self-absorbed *poseuse*. In any case, the film allows her to be little else than the obscurest imaginable object of desire, a hanger for funereal chic. The sex scenes have already earned the film a reputation as *Last Tango in Westminster* (and caused certification problems in the US), but they are pretty tame, mainly predicated on flashes of stocking top and a patina of half-hearted violence.

The Hart novel may have succeeded because of its telegraphic directness and the spiciness of its selling point. Translated into film, it looks all too familiar. Partly, it comes uncomfortably close to the early 70s television serial *A Bouquet of Barbed Wire*, in which Frank Finlay carried off the tormented paterfamilias role with rather more aplomb; and partly, it seems like an inept homage to the poised comedies of manners at which Joseph Losey and Harold Pinter excelled in the 60s. Where Pinter's scripts worked by understatement, Hare spells everything out to embarrassing effect – the strolls through the imposingly photographed Whitehall corridors of power, and overloaded moments like Stephen's appearance on television, rhetorically asking the nation, "When is an image ever the truth?"

The only redeeming touches come from Miranda Richardson – investing Ingrid alternately with simmering dignity and bruised rage – and from Leslie Caron, going wild as Anna's mother, a crazed Euro-matron with a touch of all-seeing sibyl. Otherwise, the film commits the cardinal sin of being both risible and dull; such lurid subject matter at least deserves something more flashy than the dour blue-grey light in which this London is steeped.

Jonathan Romney

Deep Cover

USA 1992

Director: Bill Duke

Certificate

18

Distributor

First Independent

Production Company

Image Organisation

Executive Producer

David Streit

Co-executive Producer

Michael DeLuca

Producer

Pierre David

Co-producers

Henry Bean

Deborah Moore

Production Executive

Cindy Hornickel

Production Co-ordinator

Alexandra M. Baum

Unit Production Manager

Margaret Fannin

Location Managers

Rick Rothen

Curtis L. Collins

Michael O'Brien

Post-production

Supervisor

Pam Winn

2nd Unit Directors

Conrad Palmisano

Greg Elam

Casting

Chemin Bernard

Associate:

Kim Hardin

Extras:

Cenex

Julie Calman

Carisa Blix

Assistant Directors

Jerry Ziesmer

Hope Goodwin

Warren R. Turner

Sandra Middleton

Robert Scott

Patricia Dyer

2nd Unit:

Sandra Middleton

Willie Simmons Jnr

Rodney Hooks

Screenplay

Henry Bean

Michael Tolkin

Director of Photography

Bojan Bazelli

In colour

2nd Unit Photography

Frank Holgate

Camera Operators

Henry Lynk

2nd Unit:

Steve Holgate

Video Effects

Will Fowler

Editor

John Carter

Production Designer

Pam Warner

Art Director

Daniel W. Bickel

Set Decorator

Donald Elmblad

Set Dresser

Michael J. Vukelich

Lead Scenic Artist

Michael T. Daigle

Scenic Artist

Ben Everson

Storyboard Artist

Darryl Henley

Special Effects

Fexco Corporation

Frank Ceglia

Costume Design

Arlene Burks-Gant

Wardrobe Supervisor

Luellyn Harper

Costumers

Key:

Caroline Cunningham

Set:

Carolyn Leone

Make-up Artists

Christina Criswell

Suzanne Parker

Sanders

2nd Unit:

Douglas Noe

Special Make-up Effects

Suzanne Parker

Sanders

Sound Recordist

Tony Smyles

Advisers

Technical:

Revalyn T. Golde

Police Technical:

Karl Amerlin

Production Assistants

Office:

Katty McDonald Jones

Rhonda Rawlings

Key Set:

Ashley Tyler

Alexander J. Hennech

LaVern Whitt

Gilbert Barnhardt

Cindy Margulies

Tyrone Townsend

Jordan Stone

2nd Unit:

Jesse D. Goins

Dan Pasternack

Rhonda Super

Stunt Co-ordinator

Greg Elam

Stand-ins

Morrie Lubezik

Stinson Duvall

(Jason) Jeff Bradford

Eleva Singleton
Reporter
John Boyd West
Cal Tech
Vicellous Shannon
Young Dealer
John Messall
Ed Cambridge
Crackheads
Ric Mancini
Congressman
Anna Berger
Congresswoman
Tony Trevino
Priest
Lionel Mathews
Winston
Clifton Powell
Leland
Jaime Cardiche
Shark
Dennis Lee Kelly
Lawyer
John Shepherd
Undercover Cop
Victoria Angulo
Torch Singer
J. W. Smith
Video Dealer

Tony Perez
Guzman's Lawyer
David Weixelbaum
Chino
Jonathan Scott
Rapper
Bilal Bashir
Rapper's Musician
James Encinas
Guzman's Guard
Neil Goldberg
Dealer in Suit
Paunita Nichols
Jacqueline
Tyrone Townsend
Street Hustler
Revalyn T. Golden
Hull's Attorney
Nick Latour
Republican
Congressman
Mike Radner
Gary Locke
Coroners
Haywood Galbreath
Man in Restroom

9,561 feet
106 minutes

Cleveland, 1972. During a snowstorm, a young boy, Russell Stevens, waits while his drug addict father attempts to rob a liquor store so that he can buy Christmas presents. Before the boy's eyes, he is shot and killed.

Cincinnati, 1992. Drug Enforcement Agency officer Carver selects the adult Stevens from a number of black police officers to go undercover in the drugs world. Working as John Q. Hull, Stevens arrives in Los Angeles, and begins making small drug buys to get close to Eddie, who supplies street dealers. When Eddie attempts to rip Stevens off in a larger deal and betray him to the police, Stevens meets Eddie's superiors, lawyer David Jason and Felix Barbosa, the outfit's Colombian connection. Felix beats Eddie to death with a pool cue, and Stevens is brought into the organisation to replace him. Jason slowly involves Stevens in his own plan to create a legal designer drug that will make them both rich. When Stevens brings Carver two kilograms of cocaine, Carver tells him he does not have the budget to make that kind of buy, and advises Stevens to keep dealing. Discovering a talent for crime, Stevens moves up in the underworld, learning how money is laundered, and murdering a rival dealer who wants his turf. He also discovers a lethal tension between Jason and Barbosa, who is setting up the partners for a bust. Stevens narrowly averts the bust, during which Jason shoots Barbosa. Barbosa's death leads to the partners' meeting Gallegos, the Colombian whom Carver had designated as the next step up the ladder, and nephew to Guzman, a Colombian politician whom the State Department was eager to see smeared.

A confrontation leaves the Colombian dead, but Stevens discovers the priorities have changed – the State Department now favours Guzman, and there will be no move against him. Stevens resigns, and he and Jason set up a meeting with Guzman, who wants the \$20 million that Gallegos had been carrying and which is now in the partners' possession. Stevens and Jason are tailed to the meeting by Taft,

an old, earnest police officer who had earlier arrested Stevens and tried to show him the error of his ways. Guzman agrees to finance Jason's synthetic cocaine plan when Taft, without backup, decides to break up the meeting. The Colombians leave, and Taft is shot by Jason. Stevens reveals his true identity to Jason, whose response is "So what?". Stevens shoots Jason. Finally, testifying before a government committee, Stevens confirms the success of the operation, but smears Guzman, against his superiors' wishes.

When trying to place *Deep Cover* as a movie, a reliance on traditional auteurism is bound to lead us astray. Director Bill Duke (*A Rage in Harlem*) does not have a profile in any real sense, but the screenwriters Henry Bean (*Internal Affairs*) and Michael Tolkin (*The Player*, *The Rapture*) do.

Their films are about outwardly-directed characters seeking to define an overwhelming emptiness. In *The Player*, studio executive Griffin Mill is an empty suit, without values or ideas, whose one defining act is the murder he commits. In *The Rapture*, the Mimi Rogers character chooses self-definition through Jesus, which leaves her bereft when her beliefs betray her. Andy Garcia's cop in *Internal Affairs* has consciously emptied himself of his Hispanic heritage in an effort to assimilate himself into the Los Angeles Police Department, but can only find himself when roused by the mirror image of an endlessly corrupt villain.

In *Deep Cover*, Stevens has built his entire life on the attempt to be nothing like his drug addict father. His retreat into police work simply provides a structure for curbing his darker impulses, which are unleashed when he is turned loose to be a drug dealer. As he says in the film's poetic voice-over narration, "Being a cop was never this easy".

The premise of *Deep Cover* is familiar – cop goes undercover to crack a drug ring, and becomes inexorably involved with the people he is supposed to bust. The unfamiliarity comes from the

intricate way that the script casts Stevens adrift in an infinity of mirrors, where almost every character he sees peers back as a distorted version of himself. Eddie, the dealer Stevens displaces, is killed for informing; Stevens too is a police informant. Jason, who becomes his partner, is as tied to Barbosa as Stevens is to Carver. The innocent child of Belinda, Stevens' addicted neighbour, mirrors his own childhood (which is why the opening sequence is far from irrelevant). Taft, Carver and Barbosa are all versions of Stevens' father. If some elements are leaned on too heavily, like the symbolic handful of blood-stained money that Stevens took from his dying father's hand and deposits on Taft's grave at the end of the film, nevertheless the script features an unusually high degree of nuanced, layered construction.

The film also contains a pair of stunning performances. Larry Fishburne – whose wonderful, mask-like face becomes increasingly interesting as the mask cracks – gives a breath-takingly assured performance that would surely earn him an Oscar nomination were this a major studio film. And Jeff Goldblum, as the yuppie lawyer/dealer Jason, once again finds a role entirely suited to his odd, hesitant timing and diffident way of occupying space.

After two decades when critical orthodoxy has swung away from respectability and towards the disreputable pleasures of the genre film, the pendulum seems to be swinging back. Of course, the modest 'surprises' one used to find in the cinema's less refined reaches have largely been eliminated. This is the only way to explain the sudden disappearance from North American theatres of Wes Craven's brilliant allegory of Reagan-era America *The People Under the Stairs*, and of *Deep Cover*. After a decade of dead baby-sitter horror movies, one returns only reluctantly to the horror genre. After a decade of increasingly loud and empty police action movies, one hardly knows how to respond to a quiet gem like *Deep Cover*.

John Harkness



Infernal affairs: Jeff Goldblum, Larry Fishburne

Dracula

USA 1992

Director: Francis Ford Coppola

Certificate
18
Distributor
Columbia TriStar
Production Companies
American Zoetrope/
Osiris Films
For Columbia Pictures
Executive Producers
Michael Apted
Robert O'Connor
Producers
Francis Ford Coppola
Fred Fuchs
Charles Mulvehill
Co-producers
James V. Hart
John Veitch
Associate Producer
Susie Landau
Production Co-ordinator
Pat Chapman
Unit Production Manager
Patricia Churchill
2nd Unit Director
Roman Coppola
Casting
Victoria Thomas
Additional:
Rick Montgomery
Dan Parada
Dixie Webster
Assistant Directors
Peter Giuliano
Kate Davey
Martin Jedlicka
2nd Unit:
Myers
W. Thomas Snyder
Miniature Unit:
Dan Coffie
Screenplay
James V. Hart
Director of Photography
Michael Ballhaus
Miniature Unit:
Bill Neil
Colour
Technicolor
2nd Unit Director of Photography
Steve Yaconelli
Camera Operator
David M. Dunlap
Steadicam Operator
Joe Ritter
Visual Effects
Roman Coppola
Visual Effects Supervisor
Alison Savitch
Special Visual Effects
Fantasy II Film Effects:
Supervisors:
Gene Warren Jnr
Leslie Huntley
Camera Operator:
Christopher Warren
Optical Supervisor:
Betzy Bromberg
Matte World:
Executive in Charge of Production:
Krystyna Demkowicz
Matte Artist:
Michael Pangrazio
Director of Matte Photography:
Craig Barron
Matte Camera Operator:
Wade Childress
Colossal Pictures:
Producers:
Paul Hettler
Ellen Erwit
Supervisor:
Gary Gutierrez
Photography:
Don Smith
Optical Supervisor:
Stuart Cudlitz
Additional Visual Effects
4-Ward Productions:
V.C.E. Inc:
Pete Kuran
Kevin O'Neill
Additional Animation:
Available Light Ltd

Editors
Nicholas C. Smith
Glen Scantlebury
Anne Goursaud
Production Designer
Thomas Sanders
Art Director
Andrew Precht
Set Design
Joseph Hodges
Set Decorator
Garrett Lewis
Project Conceptualist
Jim Steranko
Production Illustrators
Peter A. Ramsey
Mentor Huebner
Mike Mignola
Sculptures
Chief:
Jaroslan G. Alfer
Special Mechanical Effects
Supervisor:
Michael Lantieri
Foreman:
David Blitstein
Special Effects
Foreman:
Darrell D. Pritchett
Models
Miniature Unit:
Leslie G. Ekker
Puppet Co-ordinator
Don Lewis
Mechanical Puppet Design
Fred Spencer
Main Shadow Design
Greg Bell
Shadow Puppeteers
Don Lewis
Fred Spencer
Additional Puppeteers
Mitchel Evans
James Murray
Van Snowden
Mark Bryan Wilson
Music
Wojciech Kilar
Music Performed by
Los Angeles Master Chorale
Vocal:
Diamanda Galàs
Orchestrations
Wojciech Kilar
Music Supervisor
Katherine Quittner
Music Editor
Katherine Quittner
Songs
"Love Song For a Vampire" (From 'Bram Stoker's Dracula') by and performed by Annie Lennox;
"Exeloume" by and performed by Diamanda Galàs
Costume Design
Eiko Ishioka
Wardrobe
Men:
Eric H. Sandberg
Women:
Sue Moore
Costumers
Men:
Mitchell Ray Kenney
Women Set:
Amy Andrews
2nd Unit:
Men:
Jesse J. Fields
Women:
Marci R. Johnson
Make-up Design
Michele Burke
Make-up Artists
Head:
Michele Burke
Carol Schwartz
John Blake
Matthew W. Mungle
Rick Stratton
Hair Design
Michele Burke
Wigmaker
Stuart Artingstall

Hairstylists
Head:
Mari Bloom
Josee Normand
Gary Oldman
Stuart Artingstall
Title Design
Gary Guttierrez
Opticals
Cinema Research Corporation
Special Make-up Effects
Greg Cannom
Sound Design
Leslie Shatz
Supervising Sound Editors
Tom C. McCarthy
David E. Stone
Sound Editors
Dialogue:
Harry M. Cheney
Mark LaPointe
J. H. Arrufat
Supervising ADR Editor
David B. Cohn
ADR Editors
Linda Folk
John L. Sisti
Supervising Foley Editor
Mark Gordon
Foley Editors
Catherine H. LeBaigue
John Reynolds
Cindy Marty
Sound Recordists
Robert Janiger
ADR:
Jeff Gomillion
Foley:
Jackson Schwartz
Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recordists
Leslie Shatz
Marian Wallace
Aaron Rochin
Dennis Sands
Sound Effects Editors
David Williams
Sanford Ponder
Christopher S. Aud
Gregory C. Stewart
David Van Slyke
Mark L. Mangino
American Zoetrope
Jim McKee
Sound Effects
Additional:
Alan Howarth
Foley
Joe Sabella
Zane D. Bruce
Consultants
Historical:
Leonard Wolf
Roumanian:
Florina Kendrick
Religious:
P. J. Cameron
Production Assistants
Jeremy Alter
Jennifer Good
Kelly Householder
Heather Noble
Andrew Peltz
Whitney Pitkanen
Katrina Rivers
Anne Ross
Jody Spilkoman
Chris Tragos
2nd Unit:
Michael Salven
Darren Demetre

Stunt Co-ordinator
Billy Burton
Stunts
Bobby Bass
Ray Bickel
Bobby Burns
Hal Burton
William H. Burton Jr
R. J. Chambers
Steve Chambers
Tony Epper
Tommy Huff
Clay Lilley
Clint Lilley
Jimmy Ortega
Tommy Rosales
Sven Thorsen
Elliott Valderrama
Mike Watson
Animal Trainer
Mark Harden
Horse Wrangler
Corky Randall

Cast
Gary Oldman
Dracula
Winona Ryder
Mina Murray/Elisabeta
Anthony Hopkins
Professor Abraham
Van Helsing
Keanu Reeves
Jonathan Harker
Richard E. Grant
Doctor Jack Seward
Cary Elwes
Lord Arthur Holmwood
Bill Campbell
Quincey P. Morris
Sadie Frost
Lucy Westenra
Tom Waits
R. M. Renfield
Monica Bellucci
Michaela Bercu
Florina Kendrick
Dracula's Brides
Jay Robinson
Mr Hawkins
I. M. Hobson
Hobbs
Laurie Franks
Lucy's Maid
Maud Winchester
Downstairs Maid
Octavian Cadia
Deacon
Robert Getz
Priest
Dagmar Stanec
Sister Agatha
Eniko Oss
Sister Sylva
Nancy Linehan Charles
Older Woman
Tatiana von Fursenberg
Younger Woman
Jules Sylvestre
Hubert Wells
Zoo Keepers
Daniel Newman
News Hawker
Honey Lauren
Judi Diamond
Peep Show Girls
Robert Buckingham
Husband
Cully Fredricksen
Van Helsing's Assistant

11,450 feet
127 minutes

Roumania, 1462. Holy Roman knight Vlad the Impaler, known as Dracula, returns victorious from battle with Turkish invaders to find his beloved wife Elisabeta, believing him to be dead, has committed suicide. Bereft, Dracula renounces his faith and becomes a vampire. London, 1897. Young Jonathan Harker is despatched by his firm of estate agents to Transylvania to finalise a deal with Count Dracula, who is acquiring property in England. On seeing a photograph of Jonathan's fiancée Mina Murray, who resembles his dead wife, the Count persuades Jonathan to stay in his castle for a month. It soon becomes clear that the young man is being kept prisoner

by the vampire and his female consorts, while Dracula prepares to move the boxes of earth in which they rest to Carfax Abbey. The boxes are transported on board the *Demeter*, and as soon as the ship docks in England, Dracula takes on the body of a wolf and homes in on the mansion of Lucy Westenra, the wealthy friend with whom Mina is staying. Lucy couples with the beast Dracula, who visits her regularly. Her pallor and strange behaviour cause one of her suitors, Dr Jack Seward, who runs the Carfax Lunatic Asylum, to call in a specialist, Dr Van Helsing.

Dracula, in the form of the handsome Prince Vlad, approaches Mina in the street. She rejects him at first, but is gradually seduced by his exotic charm. Meanwhile, Van Helsing arrives in time to save Lucy's life with blood transfusions from her admirers, Seward and Quincey Morris, a Texan, and her fiancé Lord Arthur Holmwood. In Transylvania, Jonathan manages to escape from Dracula's castle and takes refuge in a convent, where the nuns send a message to Mina. She decides to go to him, in spite of her feelings for Vlad, who is devastated. Dracula attacks Lucy violently; she dies, but Van Helsing insists that as a vampire she must be ritually destroyed. He, Seward, Morris and Holmwood go to her crypt, where they drive a stake through her heart and cut off her head. Jonathan and Mina, now married, return to England, where Van Helsing explains that Jonathan, who has not actually tasted vampire blood, is not infected. The three of them go with Morris, Seward and Holmwood to find Dracula's resting place in Carfax Abbey. Mina is secured in Seward's quarters at the asylum while the men search for Dracula.

Dracula as Vlad comes to Mina and they drink each other's blood, pledging eternal love. The others find them and repel the vampire. Van Helsing uses hypnotism on Mina to find out that Dracula is making his way home by sea. The group decide to pursue him by train and destroy him, taking the dying Mina with them. Mina and Van Helsing arrive at the castle first and await the Count, who is racing home in a coach bearing his coffin, with Morris, Seward and Holmwood in pursuit. Dracula's coach arrives as the sun sets. As he emerges from his coffin, Jonathan cuts his throat while Morris stakes his heart. Holding the men at bay with a gun, Mina accompanies the dying Dracula into his castle, where she kisses him before driving a knife into his heart and decapitating him.

The latest in a line of flesh-eating, blood-tasting anti-heroes which includes Hannibal Lecter and Max Cady, Coppola's Dracula is the most baroque incarnation yet of this *fin de siècle* phenomenon. Monsters created by the relentless drive towards 'civilisation', by the constant need to demarcate frontiers between past and future, self and other, these creatures hover around the boundaries between

the normal and the unacceptable, threatening to penetrate our defences. They become most active at times of crisis, when, as now, history seems to be running backwards and barbarism looms on a global scale. Where confusion reigns, terror stalks.

Confusion and terror go hand in hand in Coppola's version of Bram Stoker's 1897 novel. The histrionics of Gary Oldman's virtuoso performance as the shape-shifting disaffected Roumanian prince with designs on the English bourgeoisie are matched by a barn-storming *mise en scène* which sacrifices narrative coherence to a patina of allusions. Michael Ballhaus' camerawork is urgent and uneasy, its most frequent trope a hurtling travelling shot which unsettles certainties of time and place. We often cannot tell where we are, who is who, or how and why things happen. The end result lurches between high camp and anxiety dream, between Grand Guignol and Goya's *Sleep of Reason*.

The sense of disorientation goes deeper than this. *Dracula* is, of course, a period costume drama. Much has been made of the film-makers' intention to remain faithful to Stoker's turn-of-the-century text - to the extent of putting his name above the title. Screenwriter James Hart cites Leonard Wolf's *The Annotated Dracula* as a primary source, an open invitation to the buffs to spend many a happy obsessional hour comparing this screen version with its predecessors, many of which are referred to in the course of Coppola's movie. Nevertheless, authenticity was evidently the last thing on the film-makers' minds. Yes, they included scenes from the novel which do not appear in other versions, such as the rings of blue fire encountered by Jonathan Harker as he approaches Dracula's castle. Yes, they added a prologue to register the fact that Stoker's Dracula was inspired by a historical figure, Vlad the Impaler. Yes, they used the novel's diary and letter format as a narrative device. But far from appearing as an Ur-text, Stoker's *Dracula* fades in and out like a palimpsest, scarcely visible through movie-brat braggadocio.

Coppola and Hart hit us with a veritable hailstorm of visual effects, spectacular action sequences and literary, cinematic and artistic references, from Kurosawa to Corman, Beardsley to *Beauty and the Beast*. A fairground atmosphere prevails as we are moved from one sideshow to another, emerging breathless from a chase finale which culminates in a homage to *Empire of the Senses* as Winona Ryder's Mina skewers and decapitates her vampire lover. Pleasurable as all this knowing bravado is, something is lost. Perhaps unsurprisingly given the influence of Wolf's book, Coppola's movie comes over less as a new version of Stoker's novel than as an annotated commentary on it. The relevance of Stoker's themes to 1990s audiences is reduced mainly to the transmitting of sexual disease through the bloodstream of young women (Jonathan

Harker escapes contamination because he never actually tastes vampire blood, while Renfield can be discounted since his obsession is with insects and small animals). Hart's script makes some attempt to counteract Stoker's misogyny, stressing the independent spirit of both Mina and Lucy, and portraying Mina as an enlightened New Woman, while the male characters are by and large buffoons. It is masculine ignorance and fear as much as feminine weakness and sexual curiosity which allow the invader to enter; and even though a posse of male heroes traps and destroys Dracula in the end, it is the dying Mina who delivers the *coup de grâce*, thus sealing the bond between herself and the threatening Other.

Female sexuality is much in evidence, not least in the costume and decor. The erotic scene in which Keanu Reeves as Jonathan is swallowed up by a vaginal bed is echoed in the labial folds and furls of the dresses worn by Mina and Lucy. Costume designer Eiko Ishioka excels herself with the sexually precocious Lucy, clothing her in a snake-patterned garment for one scene, a startling crimson nightgown for her encounter with the wolf/Dracula in the garden, and, after she joins the Undead, a white wedding dress whose complicated pleats and ruffs uncannily evoke a Noh Theatre ghost. Costume and make-up provide a further link between Dracula and the women. Unlike the other male characters, the Count in his different incarnations is self-consciously 'dressed', 'made-up' and his hair 'done'. Usually portrayed as a phallic figure, here he is distinctly feminised and the emphasis is on his orality (it is noticeable, for instance, that all the erotic sequences feature oral sex). When the ancient vampire first meets Jonathan he wears a scarlet train extending like a tongue behind him and sports a decorative butterfly wig and long plait. Later, as the exotic Prince Vlad attempting to seduce Mina, his hair is arranged in dark locks reaching halfway down his back.

A similar ambiguity haunts Dracula's ethnicity. Originating in the 'East', he is a Fu Manchu for our times, a harbinger of disease and disorder manifesting himself in creeping mists which threaten miscegenation. In focusing on the love story between Mina and Prince Vlad, Coppola and Hart have skirted the issue of Orientalism, attempting to dilute Stoker's racist excesses and the anti-Semitism of Murnau's *Nosferatu*, for example. Yet the problem resurfaces: in the *Arabian Nights* pored over by Lucy and Mina, or, more chillingly, in the horde of rats into which Dracula dissolves, an unavoidable reminder of Nazi propaganda films. In the delirium of spectacle and self-referentiality, it is difficult to know what to make of these darker moments, not to mention the association of femininity with viral infection. One suspects that the film-makers would prefer us not to think about it too much.

Pam Cook

Édes Emma, Drága Böbe (Sweet Emma, Dear Böbe)

Hungary 1992

Director: István Szabó

Certificate 18	Cast Johanna Ter Steege Emma Enikő Börcsök Böbe Péter Andorai Stefanics Éva Kerekes Éva Erszi Gaál Frau Horvath/ Housemistress Hédi Temessy Maria Iren Bodis Emma's Mother Zoltán Mucsi Szilárd Jolanta Mielech Kati Jurgen Mai Gerd Blahuschek German Businessmen Irma Patkós Erzsi Pásztor Hédi Temessy Iren Bodis Erzsi Gaál Zoltán Mucsi Tamás Jordán Gábor Máté Olivér Csendes Attila Kaszás Ági Csere Mária Kertész Zsuzsa Czégé Andrea Kiss Judit Czigány István Komlós Magda Darvas Szilveszter Siklósi József Horvath Katalin Sólyom Joli Jászai Zsófia Varga
Distributor Metro Pictures	
Production Companies Objectiv Filmstúdió Vallalat/Mafilm/ Videovox Stúdió/Audio KFT/Manfred Durniok Filmproduktion	
Producers Lajos Óvári Gabriella Grosz	
Screenplay István Szabó	
Director of Photography Lajos Koltai	
Camera Operator Gyula Kovács	
Editor Eszter Kovacs	
Production Designer Attila Kovacs	
Music Tibor Bornai Fero Nagy Mihály Moricz	
Music Extracts "Carnaval: Scènes mignonnes sur 4 Notes" Op.9 by Robert Schumann	
Costume Design Zsuzsa Stenger	
Sound Editor György Kovács	
Consultant Gabriella Prekop	
Subtitles Cinetype	

7,295 feet
81 minutes

Subtitles

After moving from the country to Budapest in search of better prospects, Emma and Böbe share a room at a cheerless official hotel and scrape a living as language teachers. Trained in Russian – which, following the collapse of Communism, is now no longer needed – they struggle to master English phrases that might be of use to their unruly pupils. Emma earns some extra forints by house-cleaning, while Böbe supplements her income by undefined but less respectable methods. For Emma, the only comfort is her love for Stefanics, the school headmaster; a married man, fearful of risking his job, he responds moodily, with intermittent kindness and cruelty. Threatened by a would-be rapist one night, Emma finds the subsequent police interrogation almost as offensive. She is also verbally attacked by a fellow teacher, who accuses her of incompetence, but the only support she gets from Stefanics is the offer of his country home for a weekend.

Emma and Böbe have the dacha to themselves; discussing their prospects,

Böbe confirms her determination to escape from poverty by marrying a foreigner if necessary, and warns Emma not to waste her time on Stefanics, with whom Böbe has previously had a fleeting affair. Window-shopping in Budapest, the two girls pose for Szilárd, the school art teacher, who is earning spare cash as a street artist. Böbe sets about picking up a couple of foreign men at a cafe, but Emma leaves her to it in disgust. Visited by her mother, who hopes she will return home, she remains resolved to stay in the city, even while her colleagues, desperate for income, are auditioning to be nude extras for a film company. Although she had decided to break off with Stefanics, she is unable to keep away from him, and their furtive affair continues. Visiting a church on behalf of the hospitalised Mrs Vadkerti, mother of one of her employers, she prays for guidance.

Encountering Szilárd at a dance at the teachers' hostel, Emma makes love to him in a borrowed room. Returning to her own room, she finds the police there; Böbe has been arrested for drug-dealing and prostitution, and Emma is interrogated as a potential witness. Shocked that she knows so little about her friend, she defends Böbe as best she can. Later, there is little sympathy from Stefanics, who seems to believe that Emma too is no better than a whore. Despairingly, Emma resumes her duties, taking out her fury on the class troublemaker. Eva, a new girl, is assigned as her room-mate; they do not get on. Two months later, Böbe suddenly arrives and begs the use of a shower and clean clothes; left alone, she throws herself out of a window and Emma weeps over her as she dies. Convinced that death is no solution to her predicament, Emma takes a job selling newspapers on the street.

With an afterthought (*Sketches, nudes*) tacked on to its main title, Szabó's film is an assortment of monologues, interrogations and detours, which contrives to form a dejected coherence. Supplementing Emma's recurrent nightmare, in which she rolls naked and helpless down a crumbling slope, the image of her waking hours are of bleak hostility: a chilly shower-cubicle, desolate corridors, a playground where the students burn their books, a staffroom and classroom alike in their apathy and disorder, a bus-load of foul-mouthed punks. The brief moments of pleasure in this pitiless environment – apart from one unconsummated woodland stroll – are stolen in cluttered store-rooms, the front seats of cars, and on borrowed beds. Under attack from rapist, cop, vagrant or colleague (even her grimly chanting language teacher bullies her like an inquisitor), Emma finds reflections of her predicament in glimpses of Garbo, Falconetti and a tea-set incongruously beyond reach in a shop window.

The sketches, when they appear, show her being exploited by her observers as a symbol of no great



Dream Böbe dream: Enikő Börcsök, Johanna Ter Steege

significance. And the nudes, in their turn, a vulnerable cluster of applicants for a movie project, are equivalent case-histories, melancholy representatives of an impoverished existence. All they have left, in a new-look Hungary that on release from the Communist grip has yet to find substitute inspiration, is a defiant optimism. What fuels the defiance is hard to identify. We might assume that is a basic Hungarian-ness, or that it springs from a deep-seated faith as shown by the venerable Mrs Vadkerti, but supporting evidence is sparse. Emma and Böbe, country girls on the hunt for city benefits, certainly have no intention of returning to their Hungarian roots though the land is being de-nationalised and handed back to the farmers in predictably uneven quantities. Emma's faith, such as it is, remains similarly unrequited. "Forget solidarity, unselfishness and collectivity – they've lost their value nowadays", Böbe tells her, "you're judged by what you've got". Böbe aspires to a wealthy marriage, but Szabó is elusive about her methods, partly because this is really Emma's story, in which Böbe is best interpreted as Emma's alter ego, due for exorcism, and partly because he needs to protect the dramatic flow of the narrative so that we will be as shocked as Emma at the revelation (assuming it's true) of Böbe's misconduct.

The weakness of Szabó's strategy is that he has to 'lose' Böbe for two months after her arrest (has she been imprisoned? on the streets? in hiding?). When she reappears for her suicide – in Emma's dress, another hint as to her purpose – there is no explanation for her loss of self-sufficiency. If someone of Böbe's worldly intransigence is felled so easily, what chance is there for the naked parade of teachers, nurses and shop assistants hoping to be film extras – or any other job, for that matter, that offers hard currency? What chance, indeed, for the ruthlessly victimised Emma? And yet, as another jet snarls overhead, Emma contradicts the statement afforded by

her dying friend and continues, with no obvious justification, the fight for a decent existence.

Given the suicidal tendencies of other Szabó protagonists – Mephisto, Redl, Hanussen – who are driven to self-destruction by arrogantly attempting to ignore the political events surrounding them, it is logical to interpret Emma's fate in the most despairing terms. Her nightmare fall, her frequent protestations of helplessness and paralysis, her sense of being in a 'vacuum' (she recognises, with a gleam of irony, that the word is the same in Russian and English), are vindicated by the final scene of her as news vendor, monotonously calling out "Today's news!" even when the frame is frozen. The sympathy of one of her examiners, who has seen the country turned upside down six times in 50 years, leads him to impart an aphorism he hopes will inspire her. "Life's a tremendous thing", he states, with proper solemnity. It seems unlikely that Emma would respond to the banality of this revelation, but Szabó appears to be saying, despite the terminal limbo, that it's all she has got.

In this respect, *Sweet Emma, Dear Böbe* has something of the sense of Szabó's previous film *Meeting Venus*, in which victory is narrowly snatched from defeat thanks to a performance of *Tannhäuser* which excuses all previous feuds and liaisons. Here, Wagner is replaced by Schumann, piano phrases imparting an illusory contentment to selected scenes. Also resembling *Meeting Venus* in its portrait of a social system beyond control, clogged by bureaucracy and vituperative squabbles, and of a clandestine affair with no future, Szabó's sketchy tale, loosely interjected with explanatory titles, depends heavily on the performance of Dutch actress Johanna Ter Steege as Emma. Contemplating her surroundings with a pensive and fragile wonder, she conveys just about enough painful stoicism to suggest, despite all encouragement to the contrary, that survival is worth a try.

Philip Strick

The End Of The Golden Weather

New Zealand 1992

Director: Ian Mune

Certificate

(not yet issued)

Distributor

Blue Dolphin Films

Production Company

Golden Weather Productions

For South Pacific Pictures/New Zealand

Film Commission

In association with

New Zealand on Air/

Television New Zealand

Executive Producer

Don Reynolds

Producer

Christina Milligan

Ian Mune

South Pacific Pictures

Production Executive

John McRae

Associate Producer

Dorthe Scheffmann

Production Co-ordinator

Naomi Burke

South Pacific Pictures:

Sharron Jackson

Production Manager

Jan Haynes

Unit Manager

John Wilson

Location Manager

Sally Sherratt

Post-production

Supervisor

Johannes Konigstorfer

Casting

Diana Rowan

Assistant Directors

Jessica Hobbs

Charlie Haskell

Dean Maxted

Screenplay

Ian Mune

Bruce Mason

Based on the play

by Bruce Mason

Director of Photography

Alun Bollinger

In colour

Camera Operator

John Mahaffie

Editor

Michael Horton

Production Designer

Ron Highfield

Art Director

Rob Outterside

Set Dresser

Meryl Cronin

Music

Stephen McCurdy

Music Performed by

Colleen Rae-Gerrard

David Chickering

Stanley Jackson

Christine Mori

Peter Scholes

Costume Design

Barbara Darragh

Wardrobe

Pauline Bowkett

Make-up

Marjory Hamlin

Sound Design

Greg Bell

Sound Editors

John McKay

Dialogue:

Chris Burt

Ross Chambers

Sound Recordists

Dick Reade

Music:

Graeme Myhre

Sound Re-recordist

Phil Judd

Stunts

Peter Bell

Wranglers

Lindsay Felton

Stacey Felton

Cast

Stephen Fulford

Geoff

Stephen Papps

Firpo

Paul Gittins

Dad

Gabrielle Hammond

Mum

David Taylor

Ted

Alexandra Marshall

Molly

Ray Henwood

Reverend Thirle

Steve McDowell

Jesse Cabot

Alice Fraser

Mrs Atkinson

Bill Johnson

Mr Atkinson

Alistair Douglas

Sergeant Robinson

Greg Johnson

Uncle Jim

Alison Bruce

Auntie Kass

Francie Gray

Miss Effie

Andrea Kelland

Miss Sybil

Andrew Binns

Joe Dyer

Ross McKellar

Bob Ferguson

Lucy Lawless

Joe's Girl

Kate Miles

Bob's Girl

Francis Bell

Mr Irons

Tricia Phillips

Greta

Alistair Browning

Robin Hood

David Telford

Burcher

Christian Teutenberg

Schoolboy

Shirley Duke

Robert Horwood

Georgina Monro

Tim Raby

Concert Guests

Leila Ford

Organist

Melissa Copp

Henry Dewey

David Fitchew

Christine McLay

Nicholas Pegg

Blessing Ross

Dorothy Tomlinson

Lucy White

Choir

Peter Stevens

Herne the Hunter

Angus Cooper

Muscular Firpo

Geoff Ross

Drowning Man

Bob Harvey

Lifesaving Instructor

Robert Hammond

Steve Westlake

Paul Thompson

Fraser Harvey

Rupert Harvey

Lifesavers

9,270 feet

103 minutes

New Zealand, 1935. 12-year-old Geoff Crome lives with his mother and father and his younger siblings Ted and Molly by Tiparinga Beach. Solitary and introspective, he dreams of becoming a great writer. During the summer holidays, he comes across a derelict hut belonging to an elderly couple, the Atkinsons, and adopts it as a place to write his romantic novel. But one day he finds installed there a retarded relative of the Atkinsons, Tim Barlow, who has accidentally burnt the novel.

Tim calls himself Firpo, after a champion South American boxer, and plans to achieve fame in the Olympic Games. Despite his father's disapproval, Geoff becomes friendly with Firpo, and encourages him in his plans. On Christmas Day Geoff entertains his family with a play he has written, but Ted's incompetence ruins it. Soon afterwards, to Geoff's embarrassment, Firpo shows up on the beach and publicly announces his ambitions, causing general amusement.

A local youth, Joe Dyer, sends Firpo an invitation via Geoff to compete in a race along the beach to decide the official New Zealand team for the Olympics. Geoff guesses this is a hoax but Firpo, taking it seriously, believes himself already a 'made man', and refuses to train or change his diet. Dreading the prospect of his friend's humiliation, Geoff tries the power of prayer, but only gets into trouble with his father and the local clergyman.

On the appointed day Dyer and his friends show up, along with a huge audience. To everyone's surprise, Firpo easily takes the lead, but collapses some way before the finish. Helped back to his hut by Geoff, he flies into a violent rage, accusing the boy of mocking him. Geoff flees in terror. Back home, his father upbraids him for bringing shame on the family, but his mother insists they should be proud of him. The next morning, the holidays over, Geoff goes off to school.

The 'growing up' movie in which a young person, almost always sensitive and imaginative, comes into conflict with the crass adult (and usually provincial) world around him/her has virtually become a genre in its own right. It's a formula on which anti-

podean film-makers have worked some highly idiosyncratic variants, among them Ann Turner's haunting *Celia*, John Duigan's *The Year My Voice Broke* (and its sequel *Flirting*) and the first part of Jane Campion's *An Angel at My Table*. *The End of the Golden Weather*, based by Ian Mune on an autobiographical play by the late Bruce Mason, fits neatly into the same pattern.

There are some entertaining diversions, but the main plotline springs no surprises, and the characters relapse too readily into stock types. Nor does Mune succeed, as *Celia* so brilliantly did, in meshing the child's private world of fantasy with the social and political currents of the period. With minor adjustments the story would work just as well in (say) 50s Australia, and Geoff's vision of Herne the Hunter remains no more than an occasional disturbing presence, with nothing of the resonance of Turner's *Hobiyahs*.

The theme of the dreamer versus conventional society isn't much helped, either, by populating this small New Zealand township with enough eccentrics for a *Down Under* re-run of *Amarcord*. Within the opening five minutes, Geoff encounters four assorted weirdos on an otherwise deserted beach, and even his supposedly stodgy father slips at the least encouragement into his party piece as the Demon Doctor, hauling yards of sausages from his victim's innards and flicking stray morsels of kidney off his lapel. Rather than singling Firpo out for mockery, a place like this would have welcomed him as further enrichment of the communal wackiness.

Perhaps reflecting its origins in a one-man stage show, *Golden Weather* works best in the relationship between Firpo and Geoff, two outsiders thrown together in mutual misapprehension. Whether they are two, or only one, is debatable, since Firpo might almost be Geoff's own distorted vision of himself - presenting, with his wild outbursts, naive fantasies and knobby, angular limbs, a cruel parody of pre-adolescent awkwardness. In the final shot, Geoff heads off along the beach in his school uniform, the Firpo stage of his development evidently behind him. It's an ending, like the film as a whole, that's just a little too pat to be poignant.

Philip Kemp



Marathon man: Stephen Papps

Folks!

USA 1992

Director: Ted Kotcheff

Certificate

PG

Distributor

First Independent

Production Company

Penta Pictures

Executive Producers

Mario Cecchi Gori

Vittorio Cecchi Gori

Co-executive Producer

Gianni Nunnari

Producers

Victor Draï

Malcolm R. Harding

Associate Producer

Burton Elias

Production Co-ordinators

Anne M. Simonet

Florida:

Lisa Maniscalco

Production Manager

Billy Higgins

Location Manager

Samuel P. Tedesco

Post-production

Supervisors

Florida:

Norm Wallerstein

Sara Romilly

Post-production

Co-ordinator

Florida:

Debbi Bossi

2nd Unit Director

Conrad E. Palmisano

Casting

Lynn Stalmaster

Chicago:

Jane Alderman

Susan Wieder

Extras:

Holzer Roche & Ridge

Florida:

Yonit Hammer

Tumaroff

Assistant Directors

Howard Ellis

Kevin Barry Howe

Matthew Furlin

Joshua Kotcheff

2nd Unit:

John L. Roman

Jeanne Caliendo

Michelle Marx

Sean G. Pinney

Florida:

Kevin A. Williams

Screenplay

Robert Klane

Director of Photography

Larry Pizer

Colour

Technicolor

prints by DeLuxe

2nd Unit Directors

of Photography

Ronald Vidor

Frank Holgate

Aerial Photography

2nd Unit:

Frank Holgate

Camera Operator

Edward Morey III

Steadicam Operator

Ronald Vidor

Editor

Joan E. Chapman

Production Designer

William J. Creber

Set Design

William B. Fosse

Set Decorators

Scott Jacobson

Jean Alan

Special Effects

Co-ordinators

Joey DiGaetano

Sam Barkan

Special Effects

Florida:

Kevin Harris

Music</

Cast
Tom Selleck
Jon Aldrich
Don Ameche
Harry Aldrich
Anne Jackson
Mildred Aldrich
Christine Ebersole
Arlene Aldrich
Wendy Crewson
Audrey Aldrich
Robert Pastorelli
Fred
Michael Murphy
Ed
Kevin Timothy Chevalia
Kevin
Margaret Murphy
Maggie
Joseph Miller
Jerry
T. J. Parish
Steve
John McCormack
Howard
Peter Burns
Another Trader
Jon Favreau
Chicago Taxi Driver
Jackie Roberts
Gail
Kevin Barry Howe
FBI Agent
Christopher J. Campbell
Will Knickerbocker
Taxi Drivers
Omar Cabral
Doctor Aviano
Marilyn Dodds Frank
Mrs Henney
Doris Carey Ferguson
Nurse
George O. Petrie
Sammy
Ilse Earl
Lois Elliott
Mal Jones
Retired Doctor
Sid Raymond
Retired Lawyer
George O
Doorman
Bob Gordon
William
Jerry Hotchkiss
Neighbour

Dee Dee Deering
Neighbour's Wife
Evelyn Brooks
Retired Lawyer's Wife
Robert Escobar
Florida Cop
Wanda Christine
County Nurse
Joseph R. Ryan
Patient
Teri McEvoy
Ross Gottstein
Reporters
Thomas Richter
Agent
Frankie Davila
Shoe Salesman
Toni Fleming
Lady Shoe Buyer
Juan Ramirez
Shoe Store Owner
Nydia Rodriguez Terracina
Shoe Store Owner's Wife
Frank Dominelli
Tom Milanovich
Thugs
Mary Seibel
Condo Manager
Richard Sullivan Lee
Police Officer
Gerald Owens
Doctor Bush
Angelo Anthony
Buscaglia Jnr
Tow Truck Driver
Evan Lionel
Gang Leader
Magic Slim
Blues Singer
Tony Mockus Jnr
Chicago Cop
James Andelin
Lenny
O. Boyd Clow
Lenny's Partner
Mike Barger
Paramedic
Mario Nieves
Juan Olmedo
Cousins
Connie Scurlock
Mother

9,794 feet
109 minutes

Jon, a successful Chicago stockbroker, receives a call from a hospital in Florida where his mother has been admitted. He immediately flies there to be with his parents, whom he has not seen for eight years. Trying to pay for the operation, Jon discovers that his bank account and credit cards have been frozen because of an FBI investigation of his company. He finds his mother in the hospital and his father at home in his underwear, suffering from the onset of Alzheimer's disease; he barely recognises Jon and does not even know that his wife is in hospital. While Jon is at the hospital, his father tries to cook and burns down the house. Jon tries to dump his parents on his sister Arlene, a divorcee living on alimony and trying to snare a new husband. She refuses even to answer the door, so he drives back to Chicago with his parents, much to the surprise of his wife Audrey.

The Mafia, believing that Jon has blamed it for the problems at his office, sends goons to break his hand. His father scares them off with a gun, shooting off a piece of Jon's ear in the process. The ruckus leads the apartment building to evict the family, and the FBI seizes all their assets. Ed, an FBI man planted in Jon's office, offers to let Jon - who is innocent of any wrongdoing - off the hook if he will act as an informant. His parents, terrified at the drain they have become, offer to com-

mit suicide so that Jon can collect the insurance. Their comic attempts to end their own lives leave Jon more thoroughly abused. Eventually, however, the family finds a house in the country, and Ed marries Arlene, promising to send her kids to military school.

Folks! is a feel-good movie about having your father come down with Alzheimer's; a light comedy about trying to kill your parents; a laugh-fest where the hero is more abused than Wile E Coyote, at various junctures receiving a serious eye injury, being half-deafened by a gunshot, losing a testicle and a toe, and incurring minor arm and leg injuries. It plays like an unholy combination of David Gary Goldberg's adaptation of William Wharton's *Dad*, and director Ted Kotcheff's previous hit comedy *Weekend at Bernie's*.

The central problem with *Folks!* is that it never decides on its tone. It wants the heart-warming emotionalism of the family reconciliation scenes between Jon and his father Harry, and it wants the black comedy yuks of the parents' attempted suicide and Harry's near-lethal but non-threatening disregard for his own life. Is the scene where Harry takes Jon's children to the park and gets hung up in the middle of the street supposed to be funny, or horrifying, or both? The film-makers cannot decide, and while Kotcheff is a respected craftsman as a director, he has never been particularly adept at maintaining multiple tones in a conventional movie structure. Hollywood film-makers tend not to be good at mixing tones, perhaps because they are so rarely asked to by studios which fear that ambiguities and complexities will frighten audiences raised on *Lethal Weapon* and *Home Alone*.

The actors are surprisingly good, even if there seem to be two distinctive casts at work here - Selleck and Ameche are in a realistic movie, Christine Ebersole and Robert Pastorelli seem to be in a noisy farce, and the rest seem to be watching them warily, unsure which way they should jump. I don't blame the actors; each probably gave the performance that was requested. I do feel particularly sorry for Tom Selleck, though, who is a very fine light romantic comedy actor - this generation's James Garner - working in an age when Hollywood has nothing for him to do.

It is easy to see why *Folks!* failed at the North American box office. It certainly was not because of its quality - far worse films have become hits. But *Folks!* offers nothing to interest a teenage audience, and its subject - what happens to the adult who has to care for his or her own parents - is one that people prefer not to think about. It induces guilt to think of the debts we owe our parents, and guilt is not conducive to squeezing big laughs out of people who have just spent a lot of money to see a movie, only to be reminded that they haven't spoken to their parents in five or six months.

John Harkness

Hellraiser III: Hell On Earth

USA 1992

Director: Anthony Hickox

Certificate
18
Distributor
Arrow Films
Production Company
Nostradamus Pictures
Executive Producer
Clive Barker
Producer
Lawrence Mortorff
2nd Unit:
Olive McQueen
Co-producer
Christopher Figg
Associate Producer
Olive McQueen
Production Supervisor
Miramax:
Greg Spence
Production Co-ordinators
Dale Williams
2nd Unit:
Dana Middleton
Los Angeles/New York:
Tricia Riordan
Unit Production Managers
Phil Smoot
Los Angeles/New York:
Paul Martin
Location Manager
Jim Goodman
Post-production Supervisor
Sherwood Jones
2nd Unit Director
Bob Keen
Casting
Los Angeles:
Geno Havens
New York:
Leonard Finger
North Carolina:
Clayton D. Hill
Associate:
Sharon A. Hill
Extras:
The Casting Group
Assistant Directors
Paul Martin
Ty Arnold
Paula M. Hammerel
2nd Unit:
Matthew Maiellaro
Los Angeles/New York:
Cari Frankson
Screenplay
Peter Atkins
Story
Peter Atkins
Tony Randel
Based on characters created by Clive Barker
Director of Photography
Gerry Lively
In colour
2nd Unit Director of Photography
Russ Brandt
Camera Operator
Richard Clabaugh
Steadicam Operator
Neal Forney
Blue Screen Co-ordinator
Michael Satrazemis Jnr
Special Visual Effects
Cinema Research Corporation
Producer:
Steve Rundell
Co-ordinator:
Erica Heider
Camera Operator:
Reid Paul
Editor:
C. Marie Davis
Optical Supervisor:
Dion Hatch
Optical Camera:
Eugene Eyerly
Steve Mayer
Ernest Miller
Animator:
Jay Johnson
Animation Supervisor:
Steve Wright

Paintbox Artist:
Joni Jacobson
Matte Paintings/
Photography:
Neil Culley
Supervising Film Editor
Christopher Cibelli
Editor
James D. R. Hickox
Production Designer
Steve Hardie
Art Directors
Tim Eckel
Los Angeles/New York:
David Allen Koneff
Set Design
Carey Meyer
Set Decorators
David Allen Koneff
Los Angeles/New York:
Jayne-Ann Tenggren
Set Dressers
"Jungle" Jim
Shaughnessy
Mark Franklin
Storyboard Artist
John Floyd
Los Angeles/New York:
Marc Baird
Sculptures
Head:
Paul Catlin
Allen "Boolaka"
Mansfield
Special Effects Co-ordinator
Bob Keen
Special Effects
Nik Galitzine
Eric Good
Joseph Schultz
Mechanical Special Effects Co-ordinator
Ray Bivins
Mechanical Special Effects
Bob Canipe Jr
Larry Bivins
Joe Goins
Dave Whisnant
Joel Bowman
Keith Montero
Music
Randy Miller
Additional:
Christopher Young
Music Performed by
The Symphony Orchestra and Choir of Mosfilm Studios
Orchestrations
Randy Miller
Peter Tomashek
John Kull
Music Co-ordinator
Carol Sue Baker
Music Supervisor
Carol Sue Baker
Music Editors
Doug Lackey
Carl Swartz
Songs
"Divine Thing" by Sean Dickson, performed by Soup Dragons;
"Ooh-La-La" by Sash K. Konietzko, En Esch, performed by KMFD; "Hanging Judge" performed by Armored Saint; "What Girls Want" by J. Ellison, performed by Material Issue; "Go With Me" by M. Templin, D. Coutts, performed by Ten Inch Men; "I Feel Like Steve" by John Feldman, Electric Love Hogs, performed by Electric Love Hogs; "Down, Down, Down" by J. Christian, M. Baker, G. Giuffria, B. Marlett, performed by House of Lords; "Baby Universal"

by David Bowie, Reeves Gabrels, performed by Tin Machine; "Waltzing With a Jaguar" by Tyson Todd Meade, The Chainsaw Kittens, performed by The Chainsaw Kittens; "Troublemaker" by G. Moore, M. Levine, Mladen, performed by Triumph; "Hellraiser" by O. Osbourne, L. Kilmister, Z. Wylde performed by Motorhead
Costume Design
Leonard Pollack
Wardrobe
Claire Porter
Los Angeles/New York:
Hilary Momberger
Make-up/Hair
Key:
Rudy Sotomayor
Los Angeles/New York:
Traci Smithe
Special Make-up Effects
Co-ordinator:
Paul Jones
Supervisors:
Steve Painter
Mark Coulter
Dave Keen
Los Angeles/New York:
Co-ordinator:
Bob Keen
Physical Effects
Kevin McCarthy
John Wells
Sound Design
Digital:
Tim Gedemer
Creative:
Jonathan Miller
Stephen Earnhart
Kate Hopkins
Sound Recordists
Austin McKinney
Los Angeles/New York:
Kim Ornitz
Special Sound Effects
John A. Larsen
John Joseph Thomas
Production Assistants
Deanna Gallier
Penny Pridemore
David Diliberto
Bradley Greer
Stephen Jennings
Mike Duffield
Philip Lenger
Steve Lonano
Mark Day
Karen Ghant
Logan James
Jo Heather
Christenbury
Jill Fagaley
2nd Unit:
K. T. Dunphy
Dave Young
Los Angeles/New York:
Scott Moss
Stunt Co-ordinator
Bob Stephens
Stunts
Ron Norris
Joe Murphy
Allen Penney
Bob Stephens
Bobby Bragg
Band Doubles
Greg Stentz
Stephen Harris
Jonathan Zimmerman

Lenny Rios
Anthony Fincher
Stand-ins
Nicci Johnston
Kevin Helms

Cast
Terry Farrell
Joey Summerskill
Doug Bradley
Pinhead/Elliott
Paula Marshall
Terri
Kevin Bernhardt
J. P. Monroe
Ken Carpenter
Doc/Camerahead
Peter Onyiah
Joey's Father
Aimee Leigh
Sandy
Lawrence Mortorff
Bum
Clayton Hill
The Priest
Larry Kupp
Derelict
Brent Bolthouse
CD the DJ
Philip Hyland
Brad
George Lee
Bob
David Young
Bill the Bouncer
Ron Norris
Douglas the Bouncer
Shanna Teare
Female Cop
Bobby Bragg
Bob Stephens
Male Cops
Rob Trevelier
Chris Frederick
Paramedics
Sharon Percival
Brittany Virtue
Paul Vincent Coleman
Anthony Hickox
Soldiers
Steve Painter
Young Guy
Peter Atkins
Rick the Barman
Minnie Davis
Black Poodle
Young Bobby Knoop
James D. R. Hickox
Yuppies
Ashley Laurence
Kirsty
Tonya Saunders
Angelia Thomas
Kim Ball
Cassandra Perry
Anna Marie Issacs
Flame
Go Go Dancers
John Bush
Joey Vera
Phil Sandoval
Jeff Duncan
Gonzo
"Armoured Saint"
Dan DeVita
Tour Manager
Vinnie Polselli
Sound Engineer
Gregory K. Saulter
Stacey D. Tyler
Thomas E. Taylor Jnr
John V. Brown Jnr
"ln the Black"

8,362 feet
93 minutes

New York. After witnessing a young man's death by supernatural chains in a hospital emergency room, TV journalist Joey Summerskill tries to trace Terri, the girl who brought the victim in. She is drawn to the Boiler Room, a night-club run by the sleazy J.P. Monroe. Joey befriends Terri, J.P.'s ex-girlfriend, and learns that the killer chains emanated from a bizarre item of sculpture that came from a closed-down insane asylum. J.P. discovers that the sculpture contains the spirit of Pinhead, a demon who can be freed by blood sacrifice.

Joey investigates the sculpture and learns from the video-taped testimony of a girl who previously encountered Pinhead (see *Hellraiser* and *Hellbound: Hellraiser II*) that a puzzle box Terri has brought her is the key to banishing the demon back to Hell. J.P. attempts to sacrifice Terri to the sculpture, but Terri reverses the situation and it is J.P.'s blood which frees Pinhead. The demon celebrates his release by slaughtering the denizens of the Boiler Room and raising several, including Terri and J.P., from the dead as demons.

In a dream, Joey is visited by Elliott Spencer, the WW1 officer who became Pinhead after solving the puzzle box. He tells her that he wants his evil aspect to be vanquished, but the rules of Hell are that Pinhead cannot take the box from Joey; he must convince her to give it to him willingly to gain complete control over his existence. Joey is lured to the Boiler Room by a fake TV news report of the carnage, and is confronted by Pinhead and the other demons, who pursue her through the city, spreading havoc in a church and on the streets.

After seeming to banish the demons, Joey is visited by the ghost of her father, killed in Vietnam before she was born, and gives him the box, only to find she has been tricked by a disfigured Pinhead. But the latter is lured into a limbo where he is con-

fronted by Spencer, with whom he recombines as Joey uses the box to send them both to Hell. Joey buries the box in wet cement on a building site, but the mystic designs are reproduced in the interior decoration of the office block erected over it.

● Hobbled rather than crippled by its backstory, *Hellraiser III* is a major improvement on the scrappy *Hellbound: Hellraiser II*, although it marks a further transformation of Clive Barker's distinctive debut feature into a transatlantic horror franchise. In *Hellraiser*, the London setting was transformed illogically by over-dubbing the supporting cast with American accents, even when it rendered locations and dialogue meaningless. But in *Hellbound* the action was definitely shifted Stateside, although the film was made in the UK and British players predominated. Here, intermittent shots of Manhattan firmly establish a specific locale, though the North Carolina-shot film rarely suggests a big-city setting. Even the street scenes have a claustrophobic, underpopulated feel, and the action, as in earlier movies, is confined to a few major settings, with the emphasis on the standard-issue satanic night-club.

Even more in line with requirements of mall cinema is the dropping of Barker's terminology (his Cenobites

become plain demons) and the invention of arbitrary, plot-driven 'rules' for Hell and its emissaries. But the most obvious influence of Elm Street lies in the transformation of Pinhead – billed seventeenth and called 'Lead Cenobite' in the credits of *Hellraiser* – into a cult creature worthy of innumerable *Fangoria* covers. Doug Bradley, the British player whose career has certainly benefited from the publicity decision to feature him on the poster for the original film, does manage one startlingly blasphemous, if irrelevant, scene, as Pinhead humiliates a priest and impersonates Christ by driving two of his own pins through his hands and intoning, "I am the way".

Writer Peter Atkins (*Hellbound*) and director Anthony Hickox (the *Waxwork* films) score best in their melding of a British horror sensibility with American professionalism. There is an unusual concentration on characterisation – the relationship between Joey and Terri is particularly well-developed – along with all the apparatus of Gothic horror as characters are skinned instantly, sliced with CDs, have drills or cameras rammed through their heads or distort like taffy. In the tradition of sequel-as-spectacle, this is as effective a recap of basic principles as *A Nightmare on Elm Street, Part 3* or *Evil Dead II*.

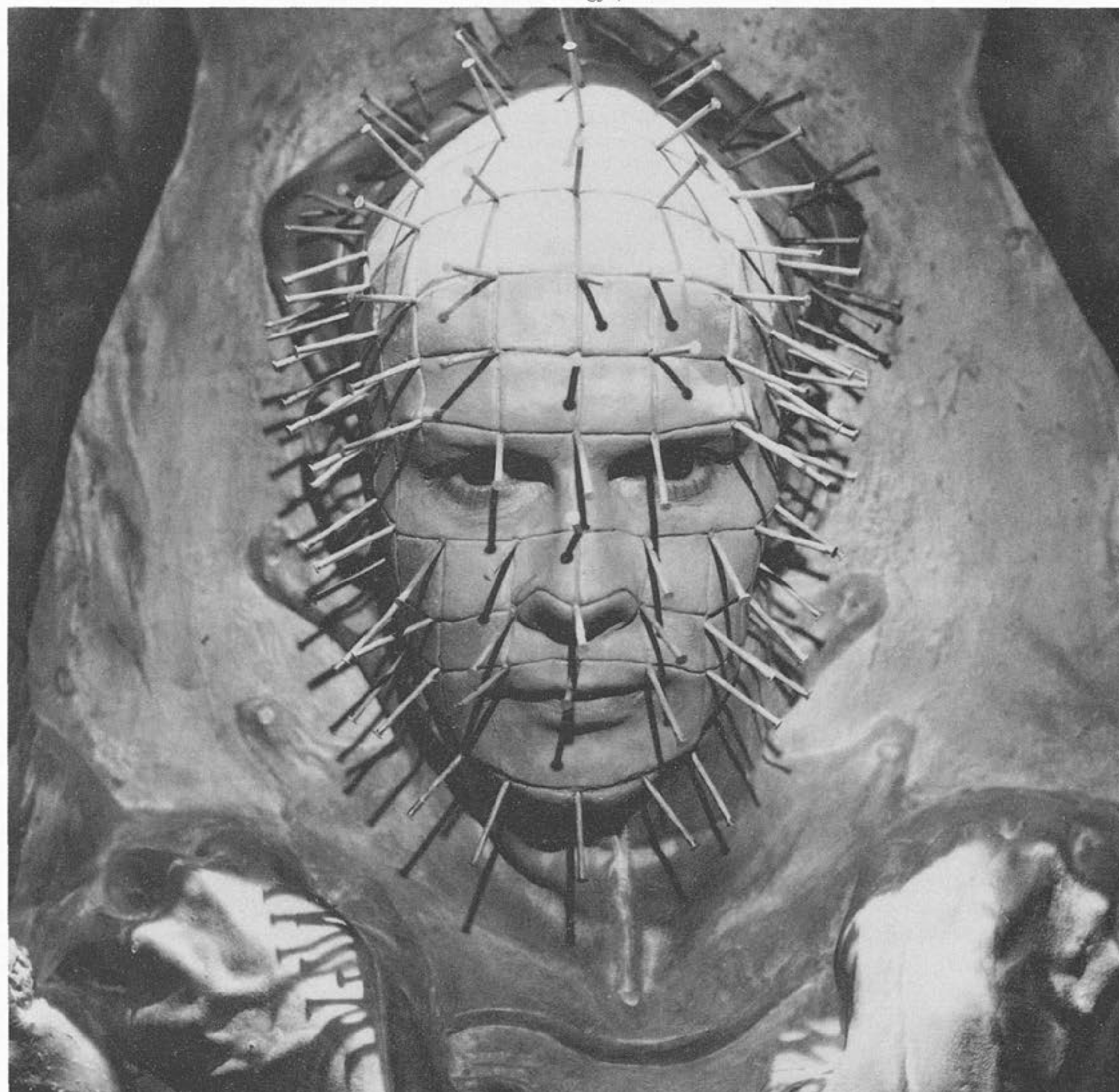
Kim Newman

Honey, I Blew Up the Kid

USA 1992

Director: Randal Kleiser

Certificate U	Anti Gravity Workshop Thomas Hollier
Distributor Buena Vista	Visual Effects Unit Director: Thomas G. Smith
Production Company Walt Disney Company	Producers: Thomas G. Smith Carolyn Soper
Executive Producers Albert Band Stuart Gordon	Co-ordinators: Michael Muscal W.L. Arance
Co-executive Producer Deborah Brock	Supervisors: Harrison Ellenshaw John T. Van Vliet
Producers Dawn Steel Edward S. Feldman	Richard Malzahn Co-supervisors: Mark Dornfeld Kevin Koneval
Co-producer Dennis E. Jones	Production Managers: Charles Finance Scott Sohan
Production Co-ordinators Pamela Cederquist Kathleen M. Courtney	Albert Cox Alan Markowitz Richard Cross
Unit Production Manager Whitney Green	Tom Seymour James Matlosz Heather Davis
Location Managers Eric Klosterman Las Vegas: Christine B. O'Rourke	Paul Howarth Isobel De Luca Jenel McGlothlin
Post-production Supervisor Glenn Ragland	Illustrator: Thomas Valentine
2nd Unit Director Leslie Dilley	Editors: Juliette Yager Victor Livingston
Casting Renée Rousselot Las Vegas: Spectrum Services	Optical Supervisors: Beverly Bernacki Candace Lewis
LA: Central Casting	Beth Brown Robert Maine Joseph Thomas
Assistant Directors Frank Capra III Douglas C. Metzger	Kennard Betts Katherine Kean Effects Supervisor: Robert Habros
Jeffrey Wetzel 2nd Unit: Jeffrey Wetzel	Line-up: Bill Aylsworth Dennis Dorney Ed Easter
David Katz Visual Effects Unit: Benita Allen Barbara D'Alessandro	Winston Quitasol Effects Graphics Bernie Gagliano
Screenplay Thom Eberhardt Peter Elbling Garry Goodrow	Visual Effects Animation Supervisor Michael Lessa
Story Garry Goodrow Based on characters created by Stuart Gordon, Brian Yuzna, Ed Naha	Visual Effects Animation Marsha Gray Carrington Elissa Bello
Director of Photography John Hora	Victor Jimenez Byron Werner Judith Bell
Colour Technicolor	Robin Penny Allen Gonzales
2nd Unit Photography Allen Easton	Animation Kurtz & Friends Opening Sequence: Bob Kurtz
Visual Effects Photography John V. Fante Camera Supervisor: Peter Montgomery	Robert Peluce Editors Michael A. Stevenson Harry Hitner
Post-photography Supervisor: Cecil Kramer	Additional: Tina Hirsch
Optical Photography Ronald Peterson James Mann Douglas Ulm Phil Huff	Production Designer Leslie Dilley
Effects Animation Photography Brandy Hill	Art Director Ed Verreaux
Stage/Matte Photography Les Bernstein Mark Hardin	Art Department Co-ordinator Diane O'Connor
Camera Operator Bill Asman	Lead Set Design Antoinette J. Gordon
Video Playback Mark Burnett	Set Design John Berger Gina B. Cranham
Imagery Computer: Kleiser-Walczak Construction Co.	Set Decorator Doree Cooper
Video: Virtue Creative Services	Minatures Set Dresser Leslie Carol Warren
Jon Bell & Tom Hudson Hill Production Services Steven Davis	Storyboard Illustrator Len Morganti Steve Burg Daren R. Dochterman



Dead on the nail: Doug Bradley

Special Effects Supervisors

Dean Miller
 Emmet Kane
 David Sosalla
 Bruce Hayes
Mechanical Effects
 Image Special Effects Co.
 Designer/Co-ordinator:
 Peter M. Chesney
Production Effects Liaison
 Kate Steinberg
Models
 Henry Gonzales
 Dennis Schultz
 Ron Gress
 Tom Griep
Miniature Effects
 Stetson Visual Services Inc.
 Supervisors:
 Mark Stetson
 Robert Spurlock
 Production Co-ordinator:
 Laurel Schneider
 Additional Effects:
 Design Setters Corporation
 David D. Johnson
 Productions
 Prop Art
 E.B. Effects and Design
Puppet Make-up Effects
 Kevin Yagher
 Productions
 Eric Schaper
 David C. Stinnett
 Mecki Heussen
 Peter H. Konig
 David P. Calvillo
 Mike Elizalde
 Glenn S. Hanz
 Kenneth Brilliant
 Charles Lutkus
 Mark Tavares
 Robert Maverick
 Brock Winkless
 Mark C. Yagher
 Teresa A. Hogan
 Evan Brainard
Music
 Bruce Broughton
Orchestrations
 Don Nemitz
Music Editor
 Patricia Carlin
Songs
 "Loco-Motion" by Gerry Goffin, Carole King;
 "Kids Wanna Rock" by Bryan Adams, Jim Vallance, performed by Bryan Adams; "Stayin' Alive" by Barry, Robin, Maurice Gibb, performed by The Bee Gees; "The Hokey Pokey" by Larry LaPrice, Charles Macak, Taft Baker, performed by Peter Renaday; "Ours If We Want It" by Tom Snow, Mark Mueller; "You're Growing" by and performed by Fred M. Rogers
Costume Design
 Tom Bronson
Costume Supervisors
 Philip Cozzo
 Dawn Jackson
Set Costumers
 Karen M. Davis
 Joseph T. Mastrolia
Make-up
 Mary Burton
Special Make-up Effects
 Co-ordinator:
 Thomas C. Rainone
 Baby Adam:
 Kevin Yagher
Title Design
 Penelope Gottlieb
Titles/Opticals
 Buena Vista Optical
Sound Design/Supervising
Sound Editors
 Dessie Markovsky
 Emile Razpopov
Sound Editors
 William G. Young
 William Hooper
 Marty Stein
 Edmund J. Lachman
 Frederik Stafford
 Michael Hoskinson

Mark Winitsky
 Bobbi Banks
Sound Recordists
 Roger Pietschmann
 Visual Effects Unit:
 James Thornton
 Music:
 Armin Steiner
ADR Recordists
 Doc Kane
 David Gertz
Foley Recordist
 David Gertz
 Dolby stereo
ADR Group Co-ordinator
 Burton Sharp
Sound Re-recordists
 John Reitz
 David Campbell
 Gregg Rudloff
 J. Allen Hurd
Sound Effects
 John Paul Fasal
 Cortney Goodin
 Alan Howarth
 Brent Winter
Foley Artists
 Greg Barbanell
 Catherine Harper
Production Assistants
 L. David Silva
 Wayne Gee
 Dieter Busch
 Michael J. Morehead
 Jon Capra
 Page Rosenberg
 Visual Effects Unit:
 Donald L. Sparks
 Stacy Hagen
 Kandi Lee White
 Dennis M. White
 Lee Scott
 Pablo Prietto
Stunt Co-ordinator
 Bobby J. Foxworth
Stunts
 John C. Meier
 Hank Hooker
 Benny Moore
 Dennis Deveaugh
 Tom Bahr
 Lynn Salvatori
 Danny Wynands
 Tracy Keehn-Dashnaw
 Jeannie Epper
 Jeff Jensen
 Cindy Folkerson
 Dick Butler
 Andrew Gordon Baird
 Roberta Hanlen
 Gary Morgan
 Cheryl Wheeler-Dixon
Animal Trainer
 Paul Calabria

Cast

Rick Moranis
 Wayne
Marcia Strassman
 Diane
Robert Oliveri
 Nick
Daniel Shalika
Joshua Shalika
 Adam
Lloyd Bridges
 Clifford Sterling
John Shea
 Hendrickson
Keri Russell
 Mandy
Ron Canada
 Marshall Brooks
Amy O'Neill
 Amy Szalinski
Michael Milhoan
 Capt. Ed Myerson
Gregory Sierra
 Terence Wheeler
Leslie Neale
 Constance Winters
Julia Sweeney
Linda Carlson
 Nosey Neighbours
Lisa Mende
John Paragon
 Lab Technicians
Ken Tobey
 Smitty
Bill Moseley
 Federal Marshall
Ed Feldman
Suzanne Kent
 Las Vegas Couple
Alex Daniels
 Uncle Yanosh

Robert Jaffe
Ron Lawrence
 Motorcycle Officers
John Hora
 Helicopter Observer
Mary Ellen Moore
 Policewoman
Randy Swallow
Pamela Cederquist
James M. Lauten
 Vegas Reporters
Shannon M. Steger
 Nevada Militia
Minori Goto
Mamoru Kanai
 Japanese Tourists

Gregory McCurdy
 Police Officer
David Scates
 Rock Fan in Crowd
Marion Palmer
 Hard Rock Reporter
Kathy Pastor
 Hard Rock Hostess
Bill Loska
 Highway Patrol Officer
Sammy
 Quark

8,031 feet
89 minutes

Wayne Szalinski – the eccentric inventor who accidentally miniaturized his children in *Honey, I Shrunk The Kids* – has moved to the Nevada desert community of Vista Del Mar, with his wife Diane, their children Amy and Nick, and the family's newest member, two-year-old Adam. On the morning Diane takes Amy to college, Wayne rushes to get himself to his new job at Sterling Laboratories and Nick to his summer job at a water park. Nick fails to attract the attention of Mandy, a beautiful classmate, while Wayne is late for an experiment. His company is working without success on reversing Wayne's shrinking mechanism in the hope of enlarging foodstuffs. The project's power-hungry co-leader Hendrickson is plotting to oust Wayne.

That afternoon, Wayne picks up an embarrassed Nick in his solar-powered van. At dinner, Nick is further upset by Adam's attention-getting antics. Wayne gets an idea for correcting the experiments and the next morning takes Nick and Adam to the lab, where he revs up the growth ray, using Adam's stuffed bunny as a subject. Unknown to Wayne and Nick, Adam is accidentally dosed with a ray, along with the stuffed animal. The machine blows up, and everyone returns home. At lunch, a surge of power from the microwave oven zaps Adam, who grows to a height of seven feet. Wayne and Nick take him to the lab, where Hendrickson is fuming over the burnt-out equipment. Disguising Adam in adult clothing, Wayne beats a retreat.

Adam becomes more unruly and chases everyone around at home, before going to sleep in a makeshift playpen. Wayne and Diane set out for Sterling Labs' warehouse to find Wayne's old shrinking gun. Unfortunately, Mandy, who had been hired to babysit, wakes Adam, who breaks free. Mandy and Nick tie him up, but another surge of power doubles his size and he breaks out of the house. After terrorising a birthday party, he settles down and Nick and Mandy catch up with him, but Hendrickson arrives and summons federal marshals to take over security and seize Adam.

Wayne and Diane arrive home to be told by federal marshal Preston Brooks that their son is in custody in a truck. Hendrickson announces that Adam will become a subject of study, and that Wayne is now off the project; however, Clifford Sterling, the firm's patriarch, shows up and cans Hendrickson. Meanwhile, the truck carrying Adam drives past a row of crackling power lines; Adam grows to 50 feet and again

escapes, stuffing Nick and Mandy into his pocket. Wayne and Sterling are horrified to learn that Adam has headed for Las Vegas. At an roadblock, an attempt is made to use the shrinking ray on Adam. Wayne coaxes him to sleep, but uses the word "nap", which sends him into a tantrum. Adam reaches Las Vegas, causing chaos. Brooks lures him out of town with an ice-cream truck. Hendrickson enlists the Air National Guard to shoot Adam with a tranquiliser gun. Diane realises that Adam doesn't recognise her because he expects his mommy to be bigger than he is, so insists that Wayne blow her up too. As a helicopter arrives and Hendrickson prepares to shoot, a 200-foot Diane shoos the helicopter away and embraces Adam. Happy in her arms, Adam sits still while Wayne shrinks him and Diane back to size.

After Diane punches out Hendrickson, everyone realises that Nick and Mandy have been accidentally miniaturised. Nick is finally making some romantic headway, and Wayne decides to give him a few moments before restoring him to full size.

One of the reasons why *Honey, I Shrunk The Kids* worked so well was its two-track narrative. While Wayne Szalinski searched frantically for his shrunken kids, the kids themselves underwent an exciting adventure in their now-enormous back yard. In the sequel, the film-makers are stuck with a much thinner narrative. After all, the ability of a two-year-old to understand his growth, and certainly his ability to articulate it, are highly limited. The innocent smashing of houses and kidnapping of siblings have limited appeal.

The problem with the film is that we never quite figure out whose story is being told. For a while, it looks as though teenage Nick is centre stage, and in fact, his plight comes close to matching the psychological underpinnings that upheld the first film. With his sister at college, Nick finds himself odd man out in a household centred around the charming antics of his kid brother, whose infuriating intrusions – he pulls out the telephone cord just when Nick has finally got his beloved



Almost groan: Rick Moranis

on the line – are viewed by Nick's parents as merely cute. To Nick, Adam's sudden growth is simply the physical manifestation of the family situation under which he has been labouring all along. Adam's putting Nick and his prospective girlfriend in his pocket is an apt metaphor for any teen with an 'adorable' younger sibling.

Apt it may be, but somewhat abrupt and final, too. When Nick ends up in that pocket, he also loses whatever narrative primacy he might have hoped to have; after all, it is difficult to spend time with people muffled in corduroy. From that point, the film, largely by default, becomes Wayne's. And Wayne has little to offer beyond the oft-told drama of a schnook getting the upper hand on the bullies who would exploit him. The bully is the yuppified Hendrickson; John Shea – previously known almost exclusively for his nice-guy roles – plays him with a hard varnish that rubs nicely against Rick Moranis's dough-boy down, but by the climax, the film is stretching to set them against each other.

So *Honey, I Blew Up The Kid* doesn't have much psychological depth; films about gigantic humans rarely do. It does, however, have some very good optical effects, particularly when matching the seven-foot Adam with his normal-sized family; the chases through the Szalinski house look very much like the real thing. The bigger Adam gets, the less believable are his antics, and one scene of him crawling over a highway overpass looks like something out of a Godzilla movie (a fact implicitly acknowledged in one very funny joke). Diane as Big Mama, on the other hand, is truly impressive.

If the imaginary settings are a mixed bag, the actual ones are perfect. While calling a desert community Vista Del Mar may be pushing the joke too far, the town itself is a perfectly evoked combination of planned intrusiveness and solitude. The development houses nestle protectively behind similarly designed fronts while a lack of public space insures that there is no natural meeting ground for the residents (one of Nick's problems is that he has no easy way to run into Mandy). So communal interaction is limited to snooping and the Szalinskis are reduced to subterfuge rather than seeking neighbourly help.

On one level, the film is a poignant reminder of the bygone days when Americans used to invent things in basements and attics. "America was built on the shoulders of people like me", Wayne asserts when his future at Sterling appears in doubt. Yet even here, he needs the help of corporate daddy Sterling to escape banishment from his own family's problems. At the end, despite the federal forces and corporate honchos who surround them, it's eccentric Dad and loving Mom who save the day. Americans may have to cut back on uncontrolled growth and shrink back down to size, but we're going to do it because we want to, the film says, not because we're ordered to.

Henry Sheehan

Laberinto de Pasiones (Labyrinth of Passion)

Spain 1982

Director: Pedro Almodóvar

Certificate
18
Distributor
Metro Pictures
Production Companies
Alphaville/
Ha Sido Producida
In association with
Del Banco de Credito
Industrial
Production Manager
Andres Santana
Assistant Director
Miguel Angel Perez
Campos
Screenplay
Pedro Almodóvar
Director of Photography
Angel L. Fernandez
In colour
Editor
Jose Salcedo
Production Designer
Pedro Almodóvar
Set Dresser
Virginia Rubio
Special Effects
Jesus Peña
Songs
"Suck It To Me" by
Bernardo Bonezzi,
Fanny McNamara,
Pedro Almodóvar,
performed by Pedro
Almodóvar, Fanny
McNamara, "Gran
Ganga" by Bernardo
Bonezzi, Pedro
Almodóvar, performed
by Pedro Almodóvar

Costume Design
Helga Liné:
Alfredo Caral
Wardrobe
Marina Rodriguez
Make-up
Beatriz Alvarez
Fernando Perez
Titles
Iskra
Sound Editor
Martin Müller
Sound Recordist
Enrique Molinero

Cast
Cecilia Roth
Sexilia
Imanol Arias
Riza Niro
Helga Liné
Toraya
Marta Fernandez-Muro
Queti
Angel Alcazar
Eusebio
Antonio Banderas
Sadec
Agustin Almodóvar
Hassan
Ana Pegamoide
Eduardo Pegamoide
Nacho Pegamoide
Bernardo Bonezzi

3,547 feet
99 minutes
(16mm)

Subtitles

Sexilia is a pop star and nymphomaniac with a chronic hatred of the sun; Riza is the gay son of the emperor of Tiran. Both are strolling in the Madrid Rastro, aiming to pick up boys. Toraya, the ex-empress of Tiran, is in town to consult Sexilia's father, a famous gynaecologist. She attempts to track Riza down, while he enjoys amorous encounters with Fabio, a photonovel porn queen and Sadec, a Moslem freedom fighter from Tiran. Riza finally meets Sexilia when, disguised as 'Johnny', he is performing with a punk band. They fall in love, but are unable to have sex.

Making time in her busy schedule to pick up the dry-cleaning, Sexilia counsels Queti, the dry-cleaner's daughter, on how to free herself from her father's sexual advances. Queti agrees to transform herself into Sexilia through plastic surgery, and thus exchange one amorous father for another. Toraya finally catches up with Riza, and Sexilia discovers they have slept together. Fleeing to her psychiatrist, who has a passion for Sexilia's father, she finally confesses the cause of her nymphomania, a childhood trauma which also made Riza gay: rejected by her father, she had had sex with boys on the beach, while Riza looked on. Sexilia meets up with Queti, who has now taken her place, and decides to forgive Riza and flee with

him to Contadora, in the Caribbean. Eusebio, the punk singer whom 'Johnny' has been standing in for, discovers that he is really Riza, and gives him away to Sadec and his fellow Tiranians. Sadec and his group arrive at the airport to find that Riza and Sexilia have already caught their plane, so they kidnap Toraya instead. Queti, disguised as Sexilia, sleeps with Sexilia's father and cures him of his fear of sex. On the flight to Contadora, Sexilia and Riza finally consummate their passion.

Labyrinth of Passion is the quintessential Spanish cult movie. Since its release ten years ago it has played uninterrupted late Saturday nights at the independent Alphaville theatre in Madrid, where it has taken on *Rocky Horror* proportions. Almodóvar claims it serves as a "baptismal rite" for each new generation of modern youth which descends on the capital. However, time has not been kind to it; and it is best read as a testimony to that brief apogee of the *movida* period when (to quote Toraya) "Madrid [was] the most amusing city in the world"

The film, then, is a catalogue of modernities from the early 80s: music by Almodóvar himself with the Pegamoides; graphic contributions by painters Costus (soon to be victims of drug abuse); an aggressively ugly aesthetic known in Spanish as *cutre*, perhaps best translated as 'grunge'. And there is much to take pleasure in here. In the opening scene Almodóvar's habitual musical accomplice Fabio McNamara (last seen playing the Avon Lady in *Pepi, Luci, Bom*) picks up the future heart-throb of Spanish cinema Imanol Arias, who is wearing a ridiculous wig. Fabio next appears as porn queen Patty Diphusa, reaching ecstasy with an electric drill (Almodóvar himself plays the 'director' in this sequence). Helga Liné is marvellous as the Tiranian Empress, cruising gay Madrid lavishly cross-dressed. And as the veteran of innumerable B-movies, she brings a perilously camp gravity to lines such as "The history of this century has been most unjust with me".

Toraya insists on speaking an outrageous mix of Italian and Spanish. Many of the references may be lost on an English-speaking audience. Choice here is the Argentine psychoanalyst "of the Lacanian school", obsessed with luring her patient's father into a very intimate session. Indeed, the delirious plot is based on a parody of the cheap psychology Almodóvar loves so much in Hitchcock: both of the main characters are condemned to promiscuity by infantile trauma (a destiny they assume with some relish); and in a typical irony they can only express their love for each other by *not* having sex. The film thus announces Almodóvar's grand theme, to be explored in his later films: the possibility of the couple, the inevitable disasters of desire.

But when *Dark Habits* (made just one year later) deftly interweaves farce and pathos, *Labyrinth of Passion* reveals an uncharacteristic contempt for its



Baptismal grunge: Marta Fernandez-Muro

gallery of grotesques. British audiences are unlikely to take kindly to such scenes as Queti's repeated rape by her father (intended as yet another Oedipal parody), and much of the scatological humour has a distinctly misogynist tone. A film of fathers rather than mothers (uniquely in Almodóvar's oeuvre), *Labyrinth of Passion* raises none of the disturbing implications of sexual violence explored in *Pepi, Luci*, and benefits from none of that film's tender exploration of relationships between women. This is partly due to the absence of Almodóvar's most skilled female actors: Carmen Maura and Julieta Serrano, who have always lent a battered dignity and a resolute pathos to the humiliations imposed on them. The unsympathetic Cecilia Roth (a bit player in the other films) simply cannot carry a whole movie herself.

But one particular pleasure of *Labyrinth of Passion*, for the fan at least, is its anticipation of later, more accomplished work. Thus we are treated to early versions of the taxi and airport scenes of *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*, not to mention the first appearance of that Almodóvarian leitmotif, Shiite terrorism. Antonio Banderas completists will savour his first role for Almodóvar as a gay freedom fighter (with a particularly acute sense of smell) who insists on putting his "queer business [*mariconadas*] above the destiny of an entire nation".

In *Labyrinth of Passion* the gay lovers are fated to dissatisfaction: Riza is 'cured' by the experienced Sexilia. It would be a mistake to take this too seriously. But the film enacts once more the disavowal of homosexuality so frequent in Almodóvar's work. And it also raises the equally curious paradox that the director who is (and was) famous as the most modern of *madrileños* should be so neglectful of the issues facing contemporary Spain. But if *Labyrinth of Passion* is Almodóvar's least sympathetic film (his most doggedly ingenious, and aesthetically dull) it is also his most unapologetically personal. Jean Douchet has argued that it is not possible simply to like Almodóvar; one has to love him. *Labyrinth of Passion* requires a considerable dose of love from its audience to make it palatable, a love which it is unlikely to find in a puritanical Britain; but if the history of cinema is not to be unjust to Pedro Almodóvar, *Labyrinth of Passion* deserves to be taken on its own, quite uncompromising terms.

Paul Julian Smith

The Living End

USA 1992

Director: Gregg Araki

Certificate
18
Distributor
Mainline
Production Companies
Strand Releasing
Desperate Pictures Ltd
With financial
assistance from the
American Film
Institute
In association with the
National Endowment
for the Arts
Executive Producers
Evelyn Hu
Jon Jost
Henry Rosenthal
Mike Thomas
Producers
Marcus Hu
Jon Gerrans
Co-producer
Jim Stark
Associate Producer
Andrea Sperling
Screenplay
Gregg Araki
Director of Photography
Gregg Araki
In colour
Lighting
Chris Münch
Editor
Gregg Araki
Paintings
Beth Muehl
Music
Cole Coonce
Songs
"The Living End" by
William Reid, Jim Reid,
"Where the Pavement
Ends" by Cole Coonce,
W. Croyte, performed
by Braindead Sound
Machine; "Reactionary
Lezbos with Gun
Theme" by Cole
Coonce, F. Weeks,
performed by
Cambodia;
"Synaesthesia",
"Cords of Love" by
Chris Carter, Cosey
Fanni Tutti, performed
by Chris and Cosey;
"The Snow", "Further
Back and Faster"
by and performed
by Coil; "Rosebud",
"Suburbarenity"
by Fred Gianelli,
performed by Fred;
"I Wanna Go to Hell",
"Godlike", "Naive"
by and performed
by KMFDM; "Jigsaw",
"IC Water" by F.
Gianelli, G. P. Orridge,
performed by Payehle;
"Mask", "Smrow-loh",
"Reality", "Mindfuck"

by and performed
by Babyland; "Agress",
"Decisions", "Ingest"
by and performed
by Blohazard PCB;
"Filament", "Blunt
Force Trauma" by and
performed by Chem
Lab; "Countdown",
"Caliber" by and
performed by Drance;
"Hale Rivet",
"Imitation", "Hang
Your Head" by and
performed by 10 Volt
Title Design
Steven Hankinson
Titles
Mar Elepano
Sound Design
George Lockwood
Sound Recordists
Dave Cash
Joyce Brouwers
Jack Kofman

Cast
Mike Dytri
Luke
Craig Gilmore
Jon
Mark Finch
Doctor
Mary Woronov
Daisy
Johanna Went
Fern
Darcy Marta
Darcy
Scot Goetz
Peter
Bretton Vail
Ken
Nicole Dillenberg
Barbie
Stephen Holman
Magie Song
7-11 Couple
Peter Lanigan
Jon Gerrans
Jack Kofman
Three Stooges
Christopher Mabli
Neo-Nazi
Michael Now
Tarzan
Michael Haynes
Jane
Peter Grame
Gus
Craig Lee
Torie Chickering
Arguing Couple
at Ralphs
J. Sidney Beswick
Buddhist
Paul Bartel
Twister Master

7,601 feet
84 minutes

Jon, a young film critic based in Los Angeles, discovers that he is HIV positive. Luke, an itinerant who is also HIV positive, drifts towards LA. He hitches a ride with two women, Daisy and Fern, then steals their car. Later Luke is picked up by a man and goes home with him. During the night, the man's wife discovers them and shoots her husband. Luke escapes, but then encounters two men who try to beat him up. He shoots at them and runs away. Luke meets up with Jon, who takes him to his place. Jon and Luke tell each other that they are HIV positive before they make love. Afterwards Jon kicks Luke out. Later Jon is woken ►

◀ up by Luke, who has just shot a policeman. Jon and Luke take to the road in the direction of San Francisco after Jon asks his best friend Darcy to look after his affairs while he is away. When Jon and Luke reach San Francisco they visit an old friend of Luke's, who shuts the door on them.

Back in LA, Darcy worries about Jon and is told by her boyfriend that he is seeing someone else. Jon and Luke continue their journey using stolen credit cards. When Luke is unable to get money from a cashpoint machine he goes gun crazy. Jon telephones Darcy to tell her he is returning home. Luke finds out and slits his wrists. The two fight and Luke knocks out Jon. Jon comes round to find himself tied up and lying with Luke on a beach. Luke jerks off on him, holding a gun in his own mouth. As he reaches orgasm he pulls the trigger, but the gun barrel is empty. Jon and Luke embrace as the sea washes over them.

● "Fuck the world", screams the graffiti in the opening shot of this self-styled "irresponsible movie by Gregg Araki", which is dedicated to "the hundreds of thousands who will die because of a big White House full of Republican fuckheads". This anarchic shout reverberates through Araki's low-budget, high-octane film. Executive produced by Jon Jost, the guru of the no-budget movie, *The Living End* has an energy that belies its impoverished finances. The pace is fast-forward, and though it was shot on 16mm, its Californian sun-scalded images easily stretch to 35mm. Aesthetically and politically this is an instant film. It is immediate, desperate and intentionally disturbing, with its two HIV positive heroes, lonesome cowboys for the 90s, who take to the road to get lost to an America that has betrayed them. Like *Swoon* and *Poison*, *The Living End* is a queer tale that makes a virtue out of the connection between homosexuality and criminality. In a rampantly homophobic culture Luke and Jon are inevitably beyond the law.

To begin with, Araki's movie is almost playfully picaresque. The pair encounter a succession of archetypes en route, ranging from two women in an open-top Chevrolet (a manifestly les-

bian Thelma and Louise) and a trio of thugs out for gay blood, to quarrelsome couples in car parks. The depiction of women is open to criticism, particularly in the case of the wife who murders her philandering husband after reminding him that the fashionably bisexual 70s are over. But she belongs with the other pop-up ciphers who are negligible in the final analysis. Besides the two male protagonists, the only other rounded character is Darcy. She is a sympathetic presence who somewhat redeems Luke and Jon, and a touchstone for the audience as the two lovers skid out of control (although the role is hardly the caricature 'fag hag' it has been accused of being, it is weakened by Darcy Marta's irritatingly melodramatic performance).

Sex and death drive *The Living End* forward, shadowing it with a terrifying fatalism. Indeed, death is figured everywhere, from bumper car stickers to cut-away shots of wasted bodies. The studiously morose Jon (his music heroes include such poets of angst as Joy Division, Echo and the Bunnymen and Morrissey) writes his thesis on "The Death of Cinema" in his room decorated with Godard and Jarman posters. This *fin de siècle* necro-romanticism suggests, a little too self-consciously, that culture is about to implode. Meanwhile, cool Luke, a James Dean *manqué*, taunts Jon with a "Live young, die young and leave a beautiful corpse" credo. With his bare bronzed torso, his fashionably ragged jeans and cigarette hanging from the corner of his mouth, he represents the homoerotic ideal of hard masculinity. This iconography is echoed in the hoardings advertising Marlboro cigarettes and cowboy boots that flank the roads during the couple's journey. The libidinous Luke endows their relationship with a remarkable sexual charge. The eroticism disappears, however, in the shockingly poignant final scene when Luke seeks ultimate abandonment in self-annihilation while telling Jon that he loves him more than life. This uncompromising and uncomfortable equation of sex with death makes *The Living End* a film dangerously lacking in hope, which leaves its two heroes stranded on the beach.

Lizzie Francke

Man Trouble

USA 1992

Director: Bob Rafelson

Certificate

15

Distributor

First Independent

Production Company

Penta Pictures
An American
Filmworks/Budding
Grove production

Executive Producer

Vittorio Cecchi Gori

Co-executive Producer

Gianni Nunnari

Producers

Bruce Gilbert
Carole Eastman

Line Producer

Tom Shaw

Associate Producer

Michael Silverblatt

Production Co-ordinator

Anne M. Shaw

Production Manager

Tom Shaw

Location Managers

Bill Bowling
Jim Maceo

Post-production

Supervisors

Norman Wallerstein

Sara Romilly

Post-production

Co-ordinator

Debbi Bossi

Casting

Terry Liebling

Chorus:

Nancy McCook

Assistant Directors

Marty Ewing

Roe Sharon

Laura Nisbet

Screenplay

Carole Eastman

Director of Photography

Stephen H. Burum

Colour

Technicolor

Prints by:

DeLuxe

Camera Operator

Dustin Blauvelt

Editor

William Steinkamp

Production Designer

Mel Bourne

Art Department

Co-ordinator

Dalia Taft

Set Decorator

Samara Schaffer

On-set Dresser

Greg Bengt

Special Sequence

Illustrator

Mentor Huebner

Special Effects

Gary Monak

Music

Georges Delerue

Music Extract

"Mass in B Minor" by
J. S. Bach, performed
by Sir Neville Marriner,
Academy of St. Martin
in the Fields

Music Supervisors

Jackie Krost

Sharal Churchill

Supervising Music Editor

Curtis Roush

Song

"Every Breath You

Take" by Sting

Costume Design

Judy Ruskin

Costume Supervisor

Lucinda Campbell

Costumers

Mitzie Corbin

Dave Whiteing

Make-up

Head:

Steve Abrams

Artists:

Gary Dennis Liddiard

Ronnie Specter

Body:

C. Jene Fielder

Main Titles

Klasky Csupo Inc.

Titles/Opticals

Pacific Title

Supervising Sound Editor

J. Paul Huntsman

Sound Editors

Matthew Sawelson

Adam Sawelson

Ralph H. Osborn III

Supervising ADR Editor

Jessica Gallavan

ADR Editors

Nicholas Vincent Korda

Mary E. Andrews

ADR Group Co-ordinator

Leigh French

Foley Editors

Michael J. Benavente

Mark Pappas

Sound Recordists

David Ronne

Music:

Bob Fernandez

Foley Recordists

Dean Drabin

Brian Ruberg

Dolby stereo

Supervising Vocal

Recordist

Ron Hicklin

Sound Re-recordists

Chris Jenkins

Mark Smith

Doug Hemphill

Rudy J. Lara

Tony Jenkins

Sound Effects Editor

Joseph H. Earle Jnr

Foley

Robin Harlan

Sarah Monat

Music Consultants

Jolene Cherry

Daniel Allan Carlin

Set Production Assistants

Carol Bawer

Jono Oliver

Kevin Shaw

Stunt Co-ordinator

Loren Janes

Stand-ins

John Hackett

Lynnda Herrick

Dog Trainer

Teresa Miller

Animal Action

Karl Lewis Miller

Cast

Jack Nicholson

Harry Bliss

Ellen Barkin

Joan Spruance

Harry Dean Stanton

Redmond Layls

Beverly D'Angelo

Andy Ellerman

Michael McKean

Eddy Revere

Saul Rubinek

Laurence Moncrief

Viveka Davis

June Huff

Veronica Cartwright

Helen Dextra

David Clennon

Lewie Duarte

John Kapelos

Detective Melvenos

Lauren Tom

Adele Bliss

Paul Mazursky

Lee MacGreevy

Gary Graham

Butch Gable

Betty Carvalho

Socorro

Mark J. Goodman

Talk Show Host

Robin Greer

Actress

Sandy Ignon

Director

Rustam Branaman
Lenny Citrano
Christopher Garr
Thugs
Rob LaBelle
Barman
Raymond Cruz
Balto
Ed Kerrigan
Kenneth Dowler
Daniel J. Goojvin
Vincent Gallardo

Thomas Griep
Pianist
June Christopher
Heidi Robles
Matt Ingersoll
Fingerprinter
Rebecca Broussard
Hospital Administrator
Mary Robin Redd
Sonya

8,964 feet
100 minutes

● Los Angeles. During a Bach rehearsal, soprano Joan Spruance comes under withering criticism from conductor Lewie Duarte, her ex-husband. Meanwhile, Harry Bliss, who runs a guard dog service, is having a contentious marriage counselling session with his wife Adele. Going to collect her car, Joan is startled by a German shepherd in Harry's van, and finds one of his advertising fliers on her car window. Arriving home, she finds her apartment has been ransacked. After the police have visited, she is joined by her jet-setting sister Andy, who announces that she has written a book exposing the peccadillos of her many lovers, including billionaire Red Layls. En route to see a publisher in New York, Andy will first check into a nearby hospital for a minor foot operation.

With a killer known as the Westside Slasher currently on the roam, Joan insists on moving into Andy's Hollywood Hills estate for safety. Once installed there, she is alarmed when one of Andy's lovers comes knocking in the middle of the night. Remembering the flier, she hires Harry and his one dog Duke for protection. After receiving a threatening telephone message, Joan takes Duke to rehearsal. Harry visits to advise her on self-protection, and they go to a Japanese restaurant where Joan gets drunk. Harry, now beginning to fall for her, is approached by Layls' attorney Moncrief, who offers him \$15,000 to steal Andy's manuscript. Although Moncrief threatens to expose his chequered past, Harry refuses, but pockets the check anyway.

Joan attends another rehearsal; this time Louie asks her to come back to him. Harry visits Joan, and they are about to make love when a disturbed Andy phones to say she is being held prisoner in a hospital. When Harry and Joan visit the hospital where she checked in, the desk clerk alerts Layls. On the verge of returning Layls' cheque, Harry instead goes to Andy's home to look for the manuscript, and finds a gift Joan has bought him. Joan and her friend Helen return home, only to be attacked by a masked man, whom Joan beats off. Harry arrives, and he and Joan finally make love.

The next day Harry and Joan see on TV that Layls is staying at a nearby medical centre. Masquerading as medics, the two go there and nearly rescue Andy. When Layls and Moncrief arrive, Layls charms Andy into returning to him, while Moncrief tells a shattered Joan about Harry's wife and the cheque. Harry drives Joan home, and takes Duke back to his office, where a dog dealer is waiting to repossess the



Beached boys: Craig Gilmore, Mike Dytri

animal. After a rehearsal, Joan – relieved to hear that the Slasher has been arrested – accepts a ride from chorus member Eddy Revere, who reveals that he is the man who has been menacing her. He drives her into the woods to kill her, but Harry, who has been following with a new dog, overpowers him. At Joan's concert, Harry turns up, as does Duke, who has escaped, and the three are reunited.

Any anticipation film lovers may have had over the reunion of the director, screenwriter and star of *Five Easy Pieces* began to sour even before the release of *Man Trouble*. Writer Carole Eastman announced that, although she wouldn't have her name taken off the credits, director Bob Rafelson had so altered her script that she was disowning the film and would never work with him again. When the film finally opened without advance screenings from its US distributor – unprecedented for a post-*Easy Rider* Nicholson feature – people were ready to pronounce it a disaster.

Man Trouble is certainly weak, but it is hardly the travesty it has been painted. Its central conceit may be creakily contrived – that an educated and refined concert singer could, out of insecurity, fall in love with a sleazy con artist who, in turn, enjoys an inner reformation as a result of being smitten. Nevertheless, it's carried off fairly well by Nicholson and Barkin. Nicholson submerges himself in the part of Harry, a man who feels he lives by a code of honour, even if he'd be hard put to define it. A natural-born liar, the more he lowers his voice and leans over to talk in a manner of intimate assurance, the more likely he is to be hustling. Barkin, on the other hand, with her angular, tough-gal features, is a perfect bit of contrary casting, her character's helplessness and passivity lending the normally brazen performer an authentic note of panic.

Despite evidence of script-mangling – the film's structure is weirdly out of balance – much of Eastman's dialogue obviously survived. What appealed in *Five Easy Pieces* was the combination of erudition and crudity that Eastman could cram into the mouths of her characters, particularly Nicholson's

roustabout pianist. Here she brings the same gift for high-falutin' vulgarity to a more prosaic, straightforwardly comic, situation. Harry, so eloquent at lying, is reduced to stammering clichés when it comes to describing his love for Joan; in Eastman's hands, these clichés manage to show how far Harry has come in his romantic ascension. "There's more than a body there", he tells a waitress, "there's a mind, too"; later, more bluntly but just as innocently, he tells Joan, "I look on a woman as a (w)hole".

The film's main problem is that both plot and subplots barge in on the human action; Rafelson can't decide how seriously to take the whole serial killer/jealous lover/malevolent billionaire business, and simply flits among them. The resolution of the murder mystery is perfunctory and so obvious it hardly counts as a suspense device. If Rafelson fumbles the thriller aspects, however, his approach to comedy is more thoughtful. One of the broader running gags involves the counseling sessions Harry takes with his Chinese-born wife, played by Lauren Tom, who has made a speciality out of playing accented Asian firecrackers. The scenes, composed largely of Tom's shooting pop-psych clichés, would normally be shot with rapid fire cutting, emphasising Nicholson's flair for comic exasperation. Rafelson keeps the cross-cutting to a minimum, shifting camera position and creating multiple perspectives even on this bit of throwaway set-up. Working with cinematographer Stephen Burum (who likes cool, placid colours), Rafelson invokes a neutral style which lags behind the frantic performers; the camera acts like a curious, but not prurient, bystander, shadowing the characters and just catching what they're up to.

The approach should have avoided the schematicism that usually dogs comedy thrillers, but Rafelson doesn't seem to have any idea how to orchestrate the film's disparate elements. What *Man Trouble* gains in rhythm and visual style, it loses in dramatic execution. The dreary unfolding of the plot robs Harry and Joan of the authenticity they almost gain in performance, and they end as two obviously manipulated easy pieces on a chessboard.

Henry Sheehan



Dastardly and motley: Jack Nicholson, Ellen Barkin

The Muppet Christmas Carol

USA 1992

Director: Brian Henson

Certificate

U

Distributor

Buena Vista

Production Company

Walt Disney Pictures

A Jim Henson

production

Executive Producer

Frank Oz

Producers

Brian Henson

Martin G. Baker

Co-producer

Jerry Juhl

Line Producer

David Barron

Associate Producer

Alexander de Grunwald

Production Co-ordinator

Jill Colley

Production Manager

Peter Coogan

2nd Unit Director

Nick Willing

Miniature Unit Director

Paul Gentry

Casting

Suzanne Crowley

Gilly Poole

Mike Fenton

Assistant Directors

Crispin Reece

Callum McDougall

2nd Unit:

Bernie Bellew

Richard Whelan

Jerry Daly

Screenplay

Jerry Juhl

Director of Photography

John Fenner

2nd Model Unit Directors

of Photography

Paul Wilson

Ivan Bartos

Camera Operators

Michael Brewster

2nd Unit:

Peter Versey

Video

Co-ordinator:

Bob Bridges

Operator:

Dave Holland

Technicians:

Kevin Brookner

Jeremy Brookner

Visual Effects

Supervisor:

Paul Gentry

Editor:

Simon Harris

Consultant:

Thomas G. Smith

Digital and Optical Effects

The Computer Film

Company:

Janek Sirrs

Janet Yale

Nick Brooks

Paddy Evasin

Mark Nemes

Peter Hanson

Roz Lowrie

Val Wardlaw

CIS Hollywood:

Steve Rundell

Andrea D'Amico

C. Marie Davis

Don Lee

Price Pethal

Joni Jacobson

Danny Mudgett

Dave Kervin

Peter Koczera

EFilm:

John Gale

David Hays

Carol Brzezinski

Peerless Camera

Company:

Kent Houston

Doug Forrest

Andy Jeffrey

Steve Cutmore

Tim Ollive

Alan Hall

Martin Body

Duboi, Paris

Editor

Michael Jablow

Production Designer

Val Strazovec

Supervising Art Director

Alan Cassie

Art Director

Dennis Boshier

Set Decorator

Michael Ford

Draughtsmen

Sarah Jane Tozer

David Wood

Scenic Artists

Steven Sallybanks

David Nicoll

Storyboard Artists

Michael Sarley

Syd Caine

Dan Sweetman

Special Effects Supervisor

David Harris

Special Effects

Norman Baillie

Darren May

Roger Nichols

Neil Swann

Ron Hone

Muppet Electro/

Mechanical Effects

Supervisor:

Larry Jameson

Tom Newby

Tim Rose

Chris Barton

Richard Ewaskio

Miniature Unit Supervisor

David Sharp

Models

Chris Howes

Tamzine Hanks

Malcolm Evans

James Gresham

Jamie Courtier

Ben Morris

Louis Glickman

Arthur Catten

Chris Warren

Tom Sturgess-Lief

Muppet Workshop

Production Unit

Supervisor:

Mark Zeszotek

Technicians:

Maria Boggi

Frank Cazaly

Debbie Coda

Henri Ewaskio

Janet Knechtel

Mark Ross

Darryl Worbey

New York:

Supervisor:

Tim Miller

Design Consultant:

Michael K. Frith

Designers/Builders:

Rollie Krewson

Peter Mackennan

Tom Newby

Mark Zeszotek

Paul Andrejco

Abigail Belknap

Isabelle Dufour

Henri Ewaskio

Jon Gellman

Paul Hartis

Laurent Linn

Michael Wick

Heather Asch

Mary Brehmer

Edward G. Christie

Patty Farr

Jim Glavan

Jim Hammer

Ann Timinelli

Jean-Guy White

Jim Henson's Creature Shop

Creative Supervisor:

John Stephenson

Production Supervisor:

William Plant

Ghost of Christmas Past

Design:

Kevin O'Boyle

Control System

Supervisor:

David Houseman

Plastershop Supervisor:

Terry Sibley

Puppeteer Co-ordinators

Mike Quinn

Karen Prell

Puppeteers

The Great Gonzo/

Bunsen Honeydew/

Waldorf/Zoot/

Betina Cratchit:

Dave Goetz

Kermit/Rizzo/Beaker/

Bean Bunny/

Belinda Cratchit:

Steve Whitmire

Statler/Floyd/Ma Bear/

Tiny Tim

The Ghost of Christmas

Present:

Jerry Nelson

Peter Cratchit/

Swedish Chef/Old Joe:

David Rudman

Miss Piggy/Fozzie Bear/

Sam Eagle/Animal:

Frank Oz

Karen Prell

Louise Gold

Rob Tygner

Additional Muppet

Performers:

Ian Allen

David Barclay

Robbie Barnett

James Barton

Joan Barton

Mike Bayliss

Simon Buckley

David Bulbeck

Marcus Clarke

Craig Crane

Sue Dacre

Taylor David

John Ecclestone

Geoff Felix

Kate Frost

Ken Haines

William Todd Jones

Ronnie Le Drew

Christopher Leith

Anthony Lymboura

Rebecca Nagan

Angie Passmore

Peter Passmore

Nigel Plaskitt

Judy Preece

Sally Preisig

Peter Robins

Gillie Robic

Tim Rose

Kaefan Shaw

Dave Showler

John Thirtle

Ian Thom

Mark Alexander Todd

Ian Tregonning

Simon Williamson

Victoria Willing

Phil Woodfine

● In a street in Victorian London on Christmas Eve, the Great Gonzo assumes the guise of Charles Dickens to tell the story of *A Christmas Carol* to his friend Rizzo the Rat, and introduces the miser Ebenezer Scrooge. At his office, Scrooge terrorises his book-keepers, spurns his nephew Fred's invitation to Christmas dinner, and ejects a pair of charity collectors. Reluctantly, he grants his clerk Bob Cratchit's request for Christmas Day off. Returning home, followed by Gonzo and Rizzo, Scrooge is visited by the ghosts of his ex-partners Jacob and Robert Marley, who warn him to expect the arrival that night of three spirits. At one o'clock, the Ghost of Christmas Past arrives, and takes Scrooge back to his childhood as a joyless swot, then to his young manhood working at Fozziewig's rubber chicken factory where he meets, but loses, the beautiful Belle.

At two, the Ghost of Christmas Present appears and takes Scrooge to a party given by Fred and his wife Clara, then to the more limited festivities enjoyed by the Cratchit family. Left in a churchyard, Scrooge meets the Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come, and is shown the callous response to his death by those who knew him, the Cratchits, bereft by the loss of their sickly crippled son Tiny Tim, and finally his own gravestone.

Awakening with relief on Christmas morning, Scrooge joyously sends a young rabbit to fetch a huge turkey. Bestowing presents on all and sundry including Fred and Clara, he makes his way to the Cratchits' house, where he gives them the turkey and promises Bob a raise. Everybody joins in the general rejoicing, whole Gonzo tells us that Scrooge became a changed man.

● "This is really scary", observes Rizzo the Rat during one of *The Muppet Christmas Carol*'s spookier moments. "Should we be worried about the kids in the audience?" "It's all right", responds Charles Dickens, aka the Great Gonzo, "this is culture". So it is, and maybe a touch too much so; there's a sense that the film-makers, overawed by their classic source, are reining back the anarchic exuberance on which the Muppets' appeal always rested. Cult acts like Fozzie Bear (Fozziewig) and Miss Piggy (Mrs Cratchit) are

seriously constrained by their Dickensian characters – although at least the long-delayed union between Kermit and Miss Piggy, celebrated in *The Muppets Take Manhattan*, has finally borne fruit (two female pigs and two male frogs – the opportunity for a pog, or even a frig, has sadly been passed up).

Given that *A Christmas Carol* is well-nigh indestructible, a little more irreverence would almost certainly have paid off. Having said that, it may seem perverse to complain that the film's one major departure from the original comes as a miscalculation. But the addition of a Robert Marley alongside Jacob (to accommodate the show's two grouchy old hecklers, Waldorf and Statler) should have been resisted: two Marleys' ghosts, chains and all, are not half as scary as one.

All the same, *The Muppet Christmas Carol* achieves the odd genuinely chilling moment, along with a lot of fun. The sets are detailed and charming, there are the usual lively, instantly forgettable songs, and several favourites (the Swedish Chef, Rowlf) show up in cheerful cameos. As lead guest human, Michael Caine makes a respectable stab at Scrooge, but never for a moment challenges the memory of Alastair Sim. This is a Scrooge whose scowl teeters constantly on the verge of benevolence, with a nice line in sardonic gags. "Very well then", he snarls, when his clerks protest against sending foreclosure notices on Christmas Eve, "you may gift-wrap them".

But the film's neatest trick is the Gonzo-Rizzo double act, with Rizzo providing a welcome undertow of scepticism ("A blue furry Charles Dickens who hangs out with a rat?") to counter-act excess sentimentality. By clarifying the storyline for the benefit of children who may not know it, while at the same time cracking distancing jokes to amuse the adults, they keep the narrative moving – and even manage to toss in a hint of death-of-the-author deconstruction. "I keep telling you", explains Gonzo, "story-tellers are omniscient". "Hoity-toity, Mr Godlike Smarty-Pants", retorts Rizzo. And the Muppets' original, education-without-tears mission isn't forgotten. "Nice story, Mr Dickens," says Rizzo at the finale. "Thanks", replies Gonzo, "if you liked this, you should read the book".

Philip Kemp



Humbug in the air: Rizzo, Gonzo

Night and the City

US 1992

Director: Irwin Winkler

Certificate

15

Distributor

First Independent

Production Company

Penta Entertainment/Tribece

Executive Producers

Harry J. Ufland

Mary Jane Ufland

Producers

Jane Rosenthal

Irwin Winkler

Co-producer

Rob Cowan

Associate Producer

Nelson McCormick

Production Associate

Janet Crosby

Production Co-ordinator

Jackie Martin

Unit Production Manager

Judith Stevens

Location Manager

Ginger M. Sledge

Casting

Todd Thaler

Extras:

Sylvia Fay Casting

Assistant Directors

Joseph Reidy

Joseph Burns

Susan Fiore

Screenplay

Richard Price

Based on the film

by Jules Dassin

(from the screenplay

by Jo Eisinger, from the

novel by Gerald Kersh)

Director of Photography

Tak Fujimoto

Colour

DeLuxe

Camera Operator

Craig Haagensen

Steadicam Operator

Larry McConkey

Video Playback

Joe Trammell

Opticals

Pacific Title

Mercer Title

Optical Effects Ltd

Editor

David Brenner

Production Designer

Peter Larkin

Art Director

Charley Beale

Set Decorator

Robert J. Franco

Key Set Dresser

Kevin McCarthy

Set Dressers

Joseph "Pepe" Bird

Gilbert Gertsen

Joe Proscia

Gordon Gertsen

Gary Levitsky

Scenic Artists

William Lucek

Stand-by:

Elisa Nevel-Demarest

Music

James Newton Howard

Music Supervisor

Libby Titus

Music Editor

Carl Kaller

Songs

"Woolly Bully" by Sam

Samudio, performed

by Sam the Sham

and the Pharoahs;

"I Wanna Be the One"

by Gardner Cole, James

Newton Howard,

performed by Ripley

Fairchild; "You Really

Got a Hold on Me"

by William Robinson,

performed by Smokey

Robinson and The

Miracles; "I Never

Loved a Man (The Way

I Love You)" by Ronnie

Shannon, performed

by Aretha Franklin;

"Forgiveness" by

Dennis Matkosky,

performed by Lynn

Davis; "Deep Water"

by Dennis Matkosky,

Darrel Brown,

performed by Bill

Champlin; "Watcha

Gonna Do About It",

"Shoulder to Shoulder"

by Vini Poncia, Alfredo

Scotti, performed by

Stone Cherry; "What'd

I Say" by and

performed by Ray

Charles; "The Great

Pretender" by Buck

Ram, performed by (1)

The Platters, (2) Freddie

Mercury; "I'll Always

Love You" by Jay

Livingston, Ray Evans,

performed by Dean

Martin; "Love Doesn't

Matter" by Gardner

Cole, James Newton

Howard, performed

by Rodney Saulsberry;

"Money (That's What

I Want)" by Berry

Gordy, Janie Bradford,

performed by Jr.

Walker and The All

Stars; "Freaky Style"

by Anthony Kiedis,

Michael Balzary, Cliff

Martinez, performed

by The Red Hot Chili

Peppers; "Straight to

the Top" by Gardner

Cole, performed

by Green Eyes;

"Never Gonna Stop"

by Gardner Cole,

James Newton Howard,

performed by Gardner

Cole; "Cool Jerk"

by Donald Storboll,

performed by

The Capitols

Costume Design

Richard Bruno

Jessica Lange;

Theoni V. Aldredge

Wardrobe Supervisors

Dierdre Nicola

Williams

Cheryl Kilbourne-

Kimpton

Make-up Artists

Michael Laudati

Robert De Niro;

Ilona Herman

Jessica Lange;

Dorothy Pearl

Title Design

Dan Perri

Supervising Sound Editors

Mike Wilhoit

Wylie Stateman

Sound Editors

Dan Hegeman

Victor Iorillo

Glenn T. Morgan

Raoul

ADR Editors

Greg Brown

Dan Rich

O. H. Manny

ADR Group

L.A. Maddogs

Foley Editor

Gary "Wrecker" Hecker

Sound Recordists

Tod Maitland

Larry Hoff

Additional:

Lon E. Bender

David Young

Music:

Robert Schaper

ADR Recordist

Paul J. Zydel

Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recordists

Andy Nelson

Steve Pederson

Tom Perry
Andrea Lakin
Samuel F. Kaufman
Sound Transfers
Magno Sound
Sound Effects Editors
Dino Dimuro
Frank Smathers
Kelly Oxford
Digital Effects
Kim Waugh
Foley Artists
Jeff Wilhoit
Jim Moriana
Production Assistants
Office:
Karen Cowan
Craig Gering
Set:
Julie Herrin
Dave Venghaus
Marcus Angevin
Robert De Niro:
Jeff Barabe
Stunt Co-ordinator
Doug Coleman

Cast

Robert De Niro

Harry Fabian

Jessica Lange

Helen

Cliff Gorman

Phil

Alan King

Boom Boom

Jack Warden

Al Grossman

Eli Wallach

Peck

Barry Primus

Tommy Tessler

Gene Kirkwood

Resnick

Pedro Sanchez

Cuda Sanshez

Gerry Murphy

Clem Caserta

Steel Jaws

Anthony Canarozzi

Emmet Gorgon

David W. Butler

Bonney

Byron Utley

Frisker

Margo Winkler

Judge

Maurice Shrog

Gym Manager

Regis Philbin

Himself

Joy Philbin

Herself

Richard Price

Doctor

Frank Jones

Dugan

Tommy A. Ford
Herman
Peter Bucossi
Attacker
Bert Randolph Sugar
Guy at Bar
Nathaniel E. Johnson
Kid Client
Brenda Denmark
Kid's Mom
Barry Squitieri
Marty Kaufman
Lisa Vidal
Carmen
Carol Woods
Secretary
Joseph D'Onofrio
Mike
Michael Badalucco
Elaine's Bartender
Deborah Watkins
Nun
Nandan Sage
Gupta
Harsh Nayyar
Faruz
Ben Lin
Duk Soo Kim
John Polce
Bouncer
Rosalind Malloff
Frieda
Kennan Scott
Kid on Phone
Henry Milligan
Cotton
Victor Machado
Santiago
Chuck Low
Freddy DiMario
Lou Polo
Jap Epstein
Louis Cantarini
Boxing Official
John Quinn
Bartender
Philip Carlo
Peck's Guy
Cameron Lane
Sharrieff Pugh
Muggers
Mitchell Tex Low
Delivery Man
Mitch Cunningham
Kid at Disco
Dave Reilly
Cop
Leslie Bart
Boom Boom's Secretary
Ann Devaney
Gorgon's Girl
Lorenzo Palminteri
Tommy Carver
Catherine Russell
Singer

9,370 feet
104 minutes

● New York. Harry Fabian, a small-time, hustling lawyer, persuades Emmet Gorgon to sue Sanchez, a boxer, after a nightclub brawl. Harry is a regular at Boxers, a bar owned by Phil and his wife Helen (with whom Harry is having an affair) and also frequented by Boom Boom Grossman, Sanchez's manager. Having learned that Boom Boom's estranged brother Al used to be a fighter, Harry applies to become a boxing promoter, but needs \$25,000 to start the business. Although



You talkin' to me?: Robert De Niro

pens to his brother, who has a heart condition. Phil is furious when Helen says she is leaving him and later learns from Boom Boom that Sanchez has seen her going into Harry's apartment.

After a row with the owners of the disco where he is staging the fights, with Al becoming dangerously over-excited, Harry now has to find \$9,000 upfront. Phil agrees to lend him the money and also offers to throw a dinner party for the boxers at the bar on the night before the fights. At the party, however, he tells Harry that the money won't be ready until tomorrow, and the next day informs an increasingly desperate Harry that he was joking about the money and then beats him up.

Harry borrows the cash from Peck, a money-lender, but Al then suffers a fatal heart attack at the disco after a fight with a security guard. Harry goes to Helen and discovers that her bar cannot open, because Phil has tipped off the licensing authorities. She asks Harry to come to California with her, but they are forced to flee from Boom Boom's men, who corner them in an alley. Harry tries to talk his way out of the situation, but they shoot him. Still talking, Harry is driven away in an ambulance, accompanied by Helen.

Although *Night and the City* marks some advance on the flatness of Irwin Winkler's directorial debut *Guilty by Suspicion*, the impression remains that this is essentially a producer's film. On paper at least, all the elements are in place: Robert De Niro in a remake of a classic film noir, transposed by a Richard Price script from London to New York, and from a wrestling milieu to boxing. The film opens strongly and enjoyably enough, bustling after Harry Fabian through the city streets, watching him out-hustle two would-be muggers at a cash machine, trailing him into the Boxers Tavern, then out again as an irate husband crashes him back into the street.

But with 'Woody Bully' on the soundtrack and De Niro very much centre frame, the echo of *Mean Streets* in particular (and also perhaps of *Good-Fellas*, which Winkler co-produced) is both inevitable and very loud. And it is immediately noticeable that *Night and*

the City fails to set up any moral, spiritual or even familial framework comparable to, say, the relationship between the De Niro and Harvey Keitel characters in Scorsese's early film. The result is that Harry's routines, such as a long speech about his time as a legal aid lawyer, while often very funny, take place in an emotional vacuum, and come perilously close to a stand-up routine. The wounded Harry's final observation about himself, that he has been doing his Harry Fabian impersonation, is exactly the problem the film itself has with De Niro's character and performance.

This fault is compounded by a lack of substance in the surrounding characters, who range from totally predictable (Al, defined by his ticking time-bomb heart condition) to puzzlingly thin. Helen, in particular, is presented as an emotional accomplice for Harry, with both of them striving for change. But her privileged insight into his character is signified only by the fact that she mimics him. All there is to discover, in other words, is the act. One feels that the crossover between their affair and their financial entanglements ought somehow to be the emotional focus of the film, but her part is so underwritten as to carry virtually no weight.

In the production notes, Winkler describes how he wanted to replace the noir-ish London shadows of Jules Dassin's original film with camera movement and "the harsh, hot colours of New York". The embarrassingly obvious point, however, is that the darkness is related to Fabian's character and dilemma. The predominance of daylight scenes and the general energy merely highlight the lack of resonance in the characters and their situation. In the end, the film's main pleasure lies in the occasional gems to be found in Price's dialogue – as, for example, when Harry describes Al's retirement home as "a Greyhound station for death". But for a more powerful examination of characters trapped in their lives and looking for change, one should turn to Price's novels *The Breaks* and *Clockers*. And his superb script for *Sea of Love* remains his best film noir update.

Steve Jenkins

Olivier Olivier

France 1991

Director: Agnieszka Holland

Certificate

15

Distributor

Gala

Production Companies

Oliane Productions/
Films A2
With the participation
of Canal Plus/
Sofica Investimage 3/
Centre National de
la Cinématographie

Producer

Marie-Laure Reyre

Co-producer

Christian Ferry

Production Co-ordinator

Laurent Lesieur

Production Manager

Gérard Molto

Casting

Margot Capelier

Marc Bellini

Luc Etienne

Assistant Directors

Michel Ferry

Kalinka Weiler

Screenplay

Agnieszka Holland

Adaptation

Agnieszka Holland

Yves Lapointe

Dialogue

Agnieszka Holland

Régis Debray

Director of Photography

Bernard Zitzermann

In colour

Editor

Isabelle Lorente

Art Directors

Hélène Bourgy

Benoît Clémenceau

Music

Zbigniew Preisner

Music Director

Zdzislaw Szostak

Song

"La berceuse 'Les
Anges'" by Zbigniew
Preisner, Michel Ferry

Costume Design

Ewa Biejat

Make-up Artist

Françoise Chapuis-

Asselin

Sound Editor

Gérard Hardy

Sound Recordists

Pierre Bèfve

François Groult

Sound Re-recordist

Jerome Levy

Animal Trainer

Pierre Cadeac

Film Extract

Boris Godunov (1989)

Cast

François Cluzet

Serge

Brigitte Roïan

Elisabeth

Jean-François Stévenin

Inspector Druot

Grégoire Collin

Olivier

Marina Golovine

Nadine

Frédéric Quiring

Marcel

Faye Gatteau

Nadine as a child

Emmanuel Morozof

Olivier as a child

Florian Billion

Little Paul

Carole Lemerle

Babette as a child

Jean-Bernard Josko

Cop

Lucrèce de La Chenardière

Neighbour

Madeleine Marie

Grandmother

Françoise Lorente

Drug Addict

Alexis Derlon

Micky

Mathias Jung

Simard

Vanessa Martin

Babette

Luc Etienne

Druot's Colleague

Marcelle Beignon

Woman with Cat

Djabula

Monkey

9,772 feet

109 minutes

Subtitles

of abduction by extra-terrestrials and Nadine, during a present-giving ceremony, shocks the family by presenting him with an identity test. Olivier exploits his parents' indulgence towards him and makes sexual advances to Nadine, who is at once hostile and fascinated. Olivier eventually answers her identity test correctly and he and Nadine make love. Olivier catches the family's neighbour Marcel (the last person to see the young Olivier alive) sexually abusing Paul, a young local boy, and attacks him. Olivier takes Paul to Paris, where he confesses to Druot that he is not the real Olivier after all. Marcel shows Druot and the stricken family where he buried the real Olivier, who was accidentally killed when he attempted to abuse him. In mourning, Elisabeth still sees the new Olivier as her son.

The subject of *Olivier Olivier* could hardly be more different from Agnieszka Holland's last film, the historical picaresque *Europa, Europa*. But it could be seen as a variation on the same central themes of imposture and doubling – and the rhyming of both films' titles is no accident. The young Jewish protagonist of *Europa, Europa* survived the Holocaust by passing as his diametrical opposite, the flower of Aryan youth; like him, the adolescent Olivier, with no clear identity of his own, acts as a mirror onto which others project their desires. The film actually suggests that Olivier is twice double: not only are there two Oliviers, but the young Olivier was born twice, having been nursed through intensive care after a premature birth.

When he confesses that he is not the real Olivier, Druot asks him why he has carried out the pretence and he replies, "To make you happy". From the start, this boy prostitute is aware of being a magnet for desire. On his arrest, he tips Druot a collusive wink and asks "Do you like me?", suggesting both sexual fancy and a more abstract, passive ability to please. Olivier does indeed please Druot, who chooses him to play the part that will fill the inspector's own lack, replacing the boy he never found and enabling him to fulfil his promise to Elisabeth.

Olivier's doubtful return is one of the doubtful elements in what is apparently a true story (so was *Europa, Europa*, but its liberties with fact and coincidence were more covert than this manifestly booby-trapped narrative). Olivier is a foreign body introduced into the family in a way that defies rational explanation. His status is given a mythic twist: he is effectively a changeling, an alien who has infiltrated the real, like that other mythic pretender, the would-be tsar Boris Godunov (Zulawski's film of the opera is glimpsed on television).

His appearance is not the only mystery. There is also Nadine's strange telekinetic power, which allows her to burst a light bulb and set a chest of drawers rattling. That staple element of family disturbance, the poltergeist, has traditionally been explained in ►

The Duvals – Elisabeth and Serge, a vet – live in rural France with their children, nine-year-old Olivier and his older sister Nadine. Elisabeth dotes on Olivier, causing resentment in both Serge and Nadine. One day, Olivier is sent on an errand to his grandmother and fails to return. Despite the efforts of police inspector Druot, who promises Elisabeth that he will find him, the boy remains missing. Elisabeth blames Nadine for the disappearance. Serge decides to take up a practice in Chad, but Elisabeth insists on remaining behind.

Six years later, a young male prostitute is brought to a Paris police station and Druot, who has been posted there, recognises him as Olivier. Elisabeth identifies the boy as her son and takes him home. Serge returns and the family is reunited. Olivier sticks to his tale

◀ psycho-sexual terms, as the repressed sexual energy of adolescent girls. Holland displaces that topos, casting Olivier as the ghost (the returning sexual repressed) and Nadine as the real centre of disruptive energies (the unrepressed). The antagonism between Nadine and her new-found brother/double/lover cannot be accounted for purely in terms of Elisabeth's blaming her for his disappearance; it is as much to do with the fact that his disruptive power has eclipsed hers.

The children are also in competition for the ability to represent the family. Olivier seems to know everything about the family's tensions, and what is wanted of him (this faculty is partly a function of Grégoire Colin's array of knowing looks, at once innocent, concupiscent and deeply alien). Before his coming, it is Nadine who produces the perfect image of the family, building a sculpture of eggs which she smashes when young Olivier vanishes.

The family tensions are essentially sexual, and Olivier's 'return' brings them to the fore, in the shape of a generalised incest. On arrival, he interrupts a tussle between Elisabeth and Nadine which is equivocally sapphic. Nadine accuses him of literally seducing everyone. Serge complains that his wife loves her son too much, but when Nadine etches "I love you" to Olivier on a window, he assumes it is for him. Olivier performs the final twist on the incest theme, telling Nadine, "Now you know how homos kiss". He means not just the kiss of a former boy prostitute, but the kiss of like and like.

It turns out, however, not to be true incest. Having pushed the family to its breaking point, the film provides a workable solution to the mystery by identifying an outside menace as the cause of disruption: the trusted neighbour who turns out to be a lurking pervert (the Wolf to Olivier's red-capped Riding Hood). If this explanation is unsatisfying in terms of the film's attack on the nuclear family, it is narratively appealing in that it allows Olivier to return to the realm of mystery, to assume the full otherness that threatened to lose itself in the family structure. Having both sown and resolved discord, Olivier again becomes no-one, his own invention.

If this seems equivocal, it is nevertheless an effective method of allowing gaps to remain in a way that French family stories rarely do. Holland alludes to a genre of bucolic family drama – notably, Jean-Loup Hubert's *Le Grand Chemin* – in which troubles are evoked but invariably resolved. Here, resolution is utterly illusory. Holland deceives us from the start, in an opening scene calculated to evoke French cinema's penchant for the comforting glow. The two rosy-cheeked children move through a radiant cornfield, playing a game of hunting Martians; when they locate the enemy, a beetle, they crush it mercilessly. What the film subsequently demonstrates is that the real alien is not so easily crushed, nor even identified.

Jonathan Romney

The Public Eye

USA 1992

Director: Howard Franklin

Certificate

15

Distributor

UIP

Production Company

Universal

Executive Producer

Robert Zemeckis

Producer

Sue Baden-Powell

Production Supervisor

Laura Greenlee

Production Co-ordinator

Thomas Vranesich

Unit Production Manager

S. Baden Powell

Location Managers

Kevin Halloran

Kelly Harris

Taman McCall

Post-production

Supervisor

Katherine Morris

Casting

Donna Isaacson

Additional:

Jane Brody

Extras:

Raquel Osborne

Voice:

The Looping Group

Associate:

Julie Hutchinson

Assistant Directors

Eric Jewett

Chuck Myer

Greg Simmons

Tom Snyder

Screenplay

Howard Franklin

Director of Photography

Peter Suschitzky

In colour

Camera Operators

Mike Stone

Sean McLin

Special Visual Effects

Industrial Light

and Magic

Producer:

Roni McKinley

Supervisor:

Ed L. Jones

Camera Operator:

Terry Chostner

Matte Camera

Operator:

Steve Redding

Editor:

Mike Gleason

Art Director:

Harley Jessup

Matte Painter:

Mark Sullivan

Optical Supervisor:

John Ellis

Editor

Evan Lottman

Production Designer

Marcia Hinds-Johnson

Art Directors

Bo Johnson

Chicago:

Dina Lipton

Set Decorator

Jan Bergstrom

Set Dressers

Mark Adams

Matt Davis

Peter Gurski

Marlin Lum

Doug Mathews

William Small

Sarah Young

Michael J. Zufelt

Quentin Schierenberg

On-set:

Keith Lewis

Special Effects

Co-ordinator

Martin Bresin

Special Effects

Michael Schorr

Don Hastings

Scott Sands

Music

Mark Isham

Music Arrangements

Ken Kugler

Score:

Shorty Rogers

Music Editors

Tom Carlson

Additional:

Scott Stambler

Songs

"You Can't Say No

To A Soldier" by

Harry Warren, Mack

Gordon, performed

by Sammy Kaye and

His Orchestra;

"Embraceable You" by

George Gershwin, Ira

Gershwin, performed

by Roy Eldridge

Costume Design

Jane Robinson

Wardrobe

Supervisor:

Tangi Crawford

Costumers:

Shari Gray

Nancy Collini

Kay Morris

Make-up Artists

Key:

Julie Hewett

Additional:

Zoe Thompson

Joe Pesci:

James Sarzotti

Titles/Opticals

Cinema Research

Corporation

Supervising Sound Editors

Robert Grieve

Stu Bernstein

Sound Editors

Dialogue:

Bobby Mackston

James Matheny

ADR Editor

Kimberly Harris

Foley Editors

John Murray

Michael Dressel

Sound Recordists

Stephan Von Hase-

Mihalik

Music:

Stephen Krause

Albert Romero

Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recordists

Supervisor:

Rick Alexander

Jim Bolt

Andrew D'Addario

Sound Effects Editor

Steve Mann

Production Assistants

Molly A. Donnellon

Susan Donnellon

Lisa L. Ladek

Katie L. Mussio

Corrine Needle

George Patterson

Mary J. Seguin

Jeff "Dash" Tomhave

Dan Perry

Kiki Sandor

Key set:

Vince Palmo

Art Department:

Scott Fredette

Stunt Co-ordinators

Dan Bradley

Roy Farfel

Stunts

Hank Calia

Peter Bucossi

Carl Nick Ciarfallo

Jimmy Casino

Michael De Luna

George Colucci

Jean-Pierre Romano

George Fisher

Stacy Logan

Stephen Mendillo

Cast

Joe Pesci

Leon Bernstein

Barbara Hershey

Kay Levitz

Stanley Tucci

Sal

Jerry Adler

Arthur Nabler

Jared Harris

Danny the Doorman

Richard Riehle

Officer O'Brien

Bryan Travis Smith

Young Cop

Max Brooks

Teen at Thompson

Street

Richard Schiff

Photographer at

Thompson Street

Laura Ceron

Puerto Rican Woman

Chuck Gillespie

Cop at Puerto Rican

Tenement

Christian Stolti

Ambulance Attendant

Jack Denbo

Photo Editor

Ellen McEluff

Lonely Woman

at Drugstore

Marge Kotlisky

Rineman's Receptionist

Timothy Hendrickson

Richard Rineman

Del Close

H. R. Rineman

Henry Bolzon

Photographer at Café

Kevin Dorsey

Singer

Gian-Carlo Scanduzzi

Maitre D' at Café

Society

David Giannopoulos

Portofino

Steve Forleo

Hood

Mick McGovern

Cop with Hood

Maurice Bravo

Tom Lauricella

George Lugg

Photographers

Vinny Argiro

Sergeant at Police

Station

Gerry Becker

Conklin

Tim Gamble

Agent Chadwick

David Hull

Thatcher White

Kyle Moore

Young Agent

Bob Gunton

Older Agent

Richard Foronjy

Farinelli

Louie Lanciloti

Mikey

Patricia Healy

Vera

Peter Maloney

Federal Watchman

Randall Stanton

Federal Guard

Jason Wells

Garage Attendant

Dominic Chianese

Spoletto

Joe Guzzardo

Spoletto's Lieutenant

Al Mancini

Camera Shop Clerk

Joe Greco

Villa Guard/Hitman

Ian Abercrombie

Mr Brown

Nick Tate

Henry Haddock J

photographs of dead men.

The Public Eye is the title of the book of gritty, realist pictures that Bernzy tries to get published, convinced that his work is as much art as the elegant still lives everyone else is producing. Like his work, he is seen as one of society's outsiders. Constant references are made (mostly by him) to the general opinion that as a 'shutterbug', he's a parasite preying on people's misfortunes. In response, the film does a pretty good job of redeeming him for humanity. Switching into glistening black and white to depict Bernzy's eye view before taking a picture, the film presents him as no less than a visionary. The tender precision with which he re-arranges his subjects (as Kay witnesses when he photographs a rich drunk lying amidst rubbish in a backstreet) invests both him and them with a kind of dignity. His pictures stand out against the glowing, period-feel ochres and yellows in which the film is shot. In his dingy apartment, the photographs hanging up to dry appear even sharper, giving them a hyperreality that suggests that it is only in them that Bernzy's own reality lies. When Arthur Nabler points out that he can't demonstrate emotion unless he's behind the camera, he's right: the act of showing Kay his pictures takes the place of a spoken declaration of what Bernzy feels for her.

One look at Kay is enough to make it obvious that the movie is a vigorous nod in the direction of *film noir*. It has the right ingredients: a mysterious (and probably materialist) *femme fatale*, and an oddball hero who nearly gets killed as a result of his infatuation for

her, then finds out she's deceived him. Though hints are dropped throughout that Kay might be leading him up the garden path, she's a disappointingly anodyne shady lady. Her betrayal is glossed over so quickly that it has little impact, although there's a nice irony in Bernzy ultimately having to weigh up her deception against his having taken the photographs of his career.

Bernzy's stills (in actuality, a mix of contemporaneous work and latter-day recreations) flash on screen to represent the violent world through which he makes his nightly journeys. While they contrast neatly with other, swisher locations, they're never more than glimpsed. In fact, the question of voyeurism is left well alone; seamy scenes are simply there to show Bernzy's ingenuity at getting photos. Where the film could take up the notion of documentary and its reflection in what goes on behind the camera, it opts instead for movie fabrication, turning Bernzy into a kind of photographic superman in a trite mafioso drama.

Considering Bernzy's own pleas for serious consideration, *The Public Eye* doesn't seem either gritty or nasty enough. Even Joe Pesci, though the mannerisms are perfect (it's a rare delight to have a hero who isn't in the usual leading man mould), comes over as too engaging. The film has to keep telling you how obsessive Bernzy is, and how sleazy people are; it's too far stuck into a story that's unable either to show all these things or to deal with its non-narrative ideas. That's a shame, because the raw material is all there.

Amanda Lipman



More flash than dash: Joe Pesci

A River Runs Through It

USA 1992

Director: Robert Redford

Certificate

PG

Distributor

Guild

Production Company

Allied Filmmakers

For Columbia

Executive Producer

Jake Eberts

Producers

Robert Redford

Patrick Markey

Co-producers

Annick Smith

William Kittredge

Barbara Maltby

Production Controller

Marsha Mann-Koff

Production Co-ordinators

Karen Hughes

Fly Fishing:

John Dietsch

Unit Production Manager

Jerry L. Ballew

Location Manager

Lori Balton

Post-production

Supervisor

Susan Moore

2nd Unit Directors

Paul Ryan

Steve Perry

Patrick Markey

Casting

Elizabeth Leustig

Associates:

New York:

Jill Greenberg

Los Angeles:

Susan Brown

Extras:

Lesa A. Shapiro

Helen S. Dollan

Voice:

Barbara Harris

Assistant Directors

J. Stephen Buck

Kaaren F. Ochoa

Screenplay

Richard Friedenberg

Based on the story

by Norman Maclean

Director of Photography

Philippe Rousselot

Colour

Technicolor

Additional Fish

Photography

Peter Pilafian

2nd Unit Director

of Photography

Paul Ryan

Editors

Lynzee Klingman

Robert Estrin

Production Designer

Jon Hutman

Art Director

Walter Martishius

Set Decorator

Gretchen Rau

Set Dressers

On Set:

John M. Ceniceris

Michael A. Shapiro

Draughtsman

Robert M. Dougherty

Storyboard Artists

Eric Ramsey

Fly Fishing:

Jason Borger

Special Effects

Co-ordinator

Richard Stutsman

Mechanical Fish Operator

John Foust

Music

Mark Isham

Orchestrations

Ken Kugler

Music Producer

Stephan R. Goldman

Music Editors

Allan K. Rosen

Katherine Quittner

Kathy Durning

Songs

"The Sheik of Araby"

by Harry B. Smith,

Ted Snyder, Francis

Wheeler; "Bye Bye

Blackbird" by Mort

Dixon, Ray Henderson,

performed by Prudence

Johnson; "Muskrat

Ramble" by Ray

Gilbert, Edward "Kid"

Ory; "Yes, We Have No

Bananas" by Frank

Silver, Irving Conn

Choreography

Miranda Garrison

Johnny Almaraz

Costume Designers

Bernie Pollack

Kathy O'Rear

Costumers

Tony Velasco

Barbara Marko

Leslie Neuman

Hugo Pena

Chuck Velasco

George Cooper

Women:

Elizabeth Barber

Men:

Amelia C. Andrews

Set:

Laurie M. Riley

Barbara L. Shiff

Los Angeles:

Chrisi Karvonides

Make-up Artists

Head:

Jean A. Black

Additional:

Anne Pattison

Title Design

Wayne Fitzgerald

Titles

Pacific Title

Sound Design

Gary Rydstrom

Supervising Sound Editor

Richard Hymns

Sound Editors

Dialogue:

Sara Bolder

Gwendolyn Yates-

Whittle

ADR Editor

C. J. Appel

Foley Editor

Sandino Baillo-Lape

Sound Recordists

Hans Roland

ADR:

David Jobe

Foley:

Christopher Boyes

Music:

Stephen Krause

Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recordists

Gary Rydstrom

Tom Johnson

ADR:

Robert Deschaine

Sound Effects Editors

Ken Fischer

Clayton Collins

Foley Artists

Dennis Thorpe

Marnie Moore

Advisers

Fly Fishing:

John Bailey

Technical:

George Croonenberghs

Trout Unlimited:

Terry Austin

Marshall Bloom

Doug McClelland

Brandt Oswald

Federation of

Fly Fishers:

Ralph Moon

Montana State

Fisheries:

Dick Vincent

Humane Society:

Dixie Johnson

Consultants

Jean Maclean Snyder

Joel Snyder

Fly Casting:

Jerry Siem

White Water:

Breck O'Neill

Production Assistants

Wardrobe:

Marie Kaderbeck

Tracey Winningham

Jim Spensley

Key Set:

Walter Parry

Set:

Alexandra Lin

Ric Morelli

Ben Zackheim

John Anklow

Kim Burns

Taj Gombart

Jonathan Swain

Landreth

Wendy Spurrier

2nd Unit:

Key Set:

Todd Turner

Stunt Co-ordinator

John Robotham

Stunts

Dan Barringer

Jason Borger

David Burton

John Dietsch

Annie Ellis

Tracy Keehn-Dashnaw

Noon Orsatti

Stagg Summers

Animal Trainer

Anne Gordon

Cast

Craig Sheffer

Norman Maclean

Brad Pitt

Paul Maclean

Tom Skerritt

Reverend Maclean

Brenda Blethyn

Mrs Maclean

Emily Lloyd

Jessie Burns

Edie McClurg

Mrs Burns

Stephen Shellen

Neal Burns

Vann Gravage

Young Paul

Nicole Burdette

Mabel

Susan Traylor

Rawhide

Michael Cudlitz

Chub

11,092

123 minutes

Montana, 1910. Norman and

Paul, the young sons of Reverend

and Mrs Maclean, are brought up by

their father to respect the laws of the

Presbyterian church. They are also

taught to love fly-fishing in the local

Big Blackfoot River. When they become

teenagers, Norman, the eldest, spends

time learning forestry, while Paul

trains as a life guard. As they grow up

their relationship becomes more

distant, but their mutual love of

fishing brings them together. Norman

eventually goes away to study English

at Dartmouth College, while Paul



Super fly guys: Craig Sheffer, Brad Pitt

◀ is half Cheyenne. They all go to a private drinking club, where Mabel is ostracised. A couple of nights later, Norman is woken by the police and asked to collect Paul, who has been involved in a brawl over remarks made about Mabel.

Meanwhile, Norman is invited by Jessie to join her family and celebrate the return of Jessie's brother, Neal, from Los Angeles. Jessie's mother suggests that Norman take Neal fishing, but the two men end up in a bar where Neal takes up with the local prostitute, Rawhide. The fishing trip is postponed to the following morning, but when the time comes a very drunk Neal turns up accompanied by Rawhide. Norman and Paul leave them to go fishing, returning to find them naked and very sunburnt. Norman accompanies Neal home and has a quarrel with Jessie. The next day, Norman discovers that he has been offered a job teaching English at the University of Chicago.

He is later invited to the station by the Burns family to see Neal off to California. He and Jessie make up and he tells her about the job. When Norman goes to see Paul to tell him that he is in love with Jessie, Paul takes him to celebrate at the local gambling den. Paul is in serious debt, and Norman tries to persuade him to leave. The following day, the two brothers and their father go fishing, and Paul catches a prize specimen. Norman tells his family about the job in Chicago and that he plans to marry Jessie. He invites Paul to join him in Chicago, but to no avail. Later that summer, Paul is found dead after a fight. As Norman grows old, he reflects on his brother's death and the intimacy he felt when they were fishing.

● "In our family, there was no clear line between religion and fly-fishing". So opines Norman Maclean in the sonorous narration that flows through *A River Runs Through It*, much of which seems to have been lifted wholesale from the autobiographical novel on which the film is based. Robert Redford's third outing as a director is a eulogy to the verdant Montana landscape and the great sport of angling which allows man to commune with man, thigh high in fresh water, and then to compare trout sizes. The pastoralism and romanticism of the project offer no surprises: cinematographer Philippe

Rousselot catches the deep, mellow colours of a summer turning to fall, a re-run of the childhood scenes in the finale fade to sepia, and Norman and his father join together in a recitation of Wordsworth's "Ode: Intimations of Immortality", just to clarify the film's literary lineage.

A River Runs Through It belongs most obviously, however, with the recent wave of films that yearn for a return to Arcadian boyhood. As with last year's *Prince of Tides*, the river is a watery sanctuary – the site of a carefree childhood. Memories of it are bright as silver-skinned fish leaping in the sun. Norman and Paul's father may be the dour disciplinarian when it comes to tutoring his sons at home, but out in the fields he is a fond teacher imparting his knowledge of rod and line. Fishing is seen as an art with its own rhythm and rhyme, and much is made of the swooping lasso movement as the fly is sent on its way. The turning point comes when Norman realises with awe that his scampish younger brother, who dares to do the shimmy in front of the local brothel or shoot the rapids in a small row boat, is radicalising the form and making a new poetry of it.

As the boys grow up and apart, fishing brings them back together; it is the one thing for which Norman can respect Paul. Otherwise, Norman watches with concern as his brother's youthful pranks mature into adult recklessness. The wilder Paul, though, is more interesting than the stolid first-born. With his golden hair and winsome grin, it is striking just how much Brad Pitt as Paul looks like the young Redford. Paul drinks and gambles in dark dens of iniquity which are a little too obviously contrasted with the purity of the spring water.

Paul also defies convention by courting a half-Cheyenne woman, which in true liberal fashion is not frowned upon by Norman, although it is presented as symptomatic of the way that Paul makes life difficult for himself. One might also question the film's noble motives in the light of the fact that Mabel makes only a token appearance. Indeed, the overall nostalgia seems incongruous given the bigoted attitudes shown to prevail in the past. The central contradiction of this film is that it makes a difficult, alienating period seem finally as perfect as a glorious summer's day.

Lizzie Francke

Sarafina!

South Africa 1992

Director: Darrell James Roodt

Certificate
15

Distributor
Warner Bros

Production Company
Ideal Films
In association with
Distant Horizon/
Videovision
Enterprises/Les Films
Ariane/VPI/BBC

Executive Producers
Kirk D'Amico
Sudhir Pragjee
Producers
Anant Singh
BBC;
David M. Thompson

Line Producer
Tania Jenkins
Associate Producers
Helena Spring
Sanjeev Singh

Production Co-ordinator
Alison Ellard
Location Manager
John Morapama
Location Supervisor
Lyne Motijoane

Post-production Supervisors
Lesley Fox
Paul Janssen
Post-production Co-ordinators
Brian Cox
Mickey Nivelli
Assistant Directors
Graham Hickson
Thomas Mogotlane
Charles Biggs

Screenplay
William Nicholson
Mbongeni Ngema
Based on the musical
by Mbongeni Ngema
Director of Photography
Mark Vicente

Colour
Agfa Color
2nd Unit Camera Operators
Giulio Biccardi
Michael Brierley
Steadicam Operator
Paul Gilpin

Graphic Design
Rosalind Lurie

Editors
Peter Hollywood
Sarah Thomas
Associate Editor
David Heitner

Production Designer
David Barkham

Set Dressers
Emelia Roux

Stand-by:
Danny Tsatsi

Special Effects Co-ordinator
Rick Cresswell

Music
Stanley Myers

Music
Arrangements/Music

Producer
Mbongeni Ngema

Music Editor
Robin Clarke

Songs
"Sarafina", "Bring

Back Nelson Mandela",
"Sechaba" by Hugh

Masekela, "Freedom
Is Coming Tomorrow",
"Thank You Mama",
"Lizobuya", "Nkonyane

Kandaba", "Give
Us Power", "Sabela",
"Safa Saphel" Isizwe"

by Mbongeni Ngema,
"The Lord's Prayer"

(traditional), "Vuma
Dlozi Lami" by

Mbongeni Ngema,
Zammo Magubane,
performed by

Committed Artists;

"One More Time"

by Dean Pitchford,
Tom Snow, performed
by James Ingram

Choreography
Michael Peters

Costume Design
Sylvia Van Heerden

Make-up
Gabriella Molnar

Supervising Sound Editor
Nicky De Beer

Sound Editors
Marcelle Mouton

Dialogue:
Elinor Hardy

ADR Editors
Sharon Hawkes
Gary McIntyre

Foley Editor
Juli Vandenberg

Sound Recordists
Henry Prentice

Music:
Eddy Mathiba

ADR Recordists
Minky Koekemoer

Sid Knowles
Foley Recordist
Minky Koekemoer

Dolby stereo
Consultant:
Geoff Tucker

Sound Re-recordist
Mark Phillips

Sound Transfers
Akbar Ali Goolam

Eddy Lawson
James Preston
Foley Artists
Juliet Phillips

Tracey Greenberg
Leith Ridley
Production Assistant
Michael John Motsogi

Stunt Co-ordinator
Roly Jansen

Stunts
Tyrone Stevenson

Neville Strydom
Chris Ollie
Whoopi Goldberg Stand-in
Dudu Msimanga

Armourer
Stuart Wentzel

Cast
Leleti Khumalo
Sarafina

Whoopi Goldberg
Mary Masombuka

Miriam Makeba
Angelina

John Kani
School Principal

Dumisani Dlamini
Crocodile

Mbongeni Ngema
Sabela

Sipho Kunene
Guitar

Tertius Meintjes
Lieutenant Bloem

Robert Whithead
Interrogator

Somizi "Whacko" Mhlongo
Fire

Nhlanhla Ngema
Stimela

Faca Kulu
Eddie

Wendy Mseleku
China

Mary Twala
Sarafina's

Grandmother
James Mthoba
Sarafina's Uncle

Greg Latter
Gideon De Wet
Policemen

Nicky Rebelo
James Whyte
Soldiers

Bheki Mqadi
Moses

Michele Bestbier
Mrs Hendriks

Patrick Ndlovu
Victor Gumed

David Manqele
Preacher

Sibusiso Ngema
Funeral Leader

Zanele Sangweni
Lindiwe

Ayanda Nhlangothi
Thulani

Bafana Hendriks
Jabu

Pheto Wildeman
Nhanhla

Xolani Dlamini
Siya Ngcobo

Sarafina's Brothers
Louis Seboko
Joe Masombuka

Sam Ngakane
Guitar's Father

Doris Sehula
Woman Shopper

Dominic Skosana
Ishmael Boikanyo
Prison Guards

Siphamandla Ngcamu
Khanyo Maphumulo
Vukani Dlamini

Dipuo Lehlengwa
Mfana "Jones" Hlope
Testimonies

Congo Radebe
Silence

Mfana "Jones" Hlope
Siphamandla Ngcamu
Thulani Didi

Vincent Ngobese
Vukani "Marko" Dlamini
Crocodile's Gang

Members
Gugwana Dlamini
Dipuo Lehlengwa
Khululwe Sithole
Batho Mhlongo

Thulani Didi
Vincent Ngobese
Dancers

10,476 feet
116 minutes

Eric Seema
Shebeen Drinkers

South Africa. Schoolgirl Sarafina
lives with her aunt, uncle and
younger brothers in Soweto, while her
mother Angelina works as a servant in
a white household in Johannesburg. A
state of emergency has been declared.
Sarafina's hero is the imprisoned Nel-
son Mandela. In her imagination she
addresses her questions and fears to
him. At school she idolises her history
teacher Mary Masombuka, who dares
to deviate from the approved syllabus,
using lessons about the discovery of
South Africa to instil a sense of pride
and political awareness in her pupils.
She also helps the children plan a
school play about the hoped-for release
of Nelson Mandela. The school attracts
police attention following an arson
attack by one of the pupils, Crocodile,
and his gang, and Mary herself is
accused by the threatening Lieutenant
Bloem of corrupting young minds with
communism. The school children boy-
cott white-owned stores, despite the
heavy military presence.

Visiting Mary at home, Sarafina dis-
covers she has a gun which belongs to
her activist husband Joe. Mary reas-
sures Sarafina of her desire for a peace-
ful South Africa. Not long after, she is
arrested by Bloem and instructs
Sarafina to dispose of the gun. After
seeing her classmate Guitar talking to
the black policeman Sabela, Sarafina,
together with some friends, confronts
him with her suspicion that he is an
informer. Guitar confesses, explaining
he has been blackmailed. A school riot
escalates when police fire at the

Velaphi Msini
Mate Bashe

Princess Msala
Teachers

Sbongile Dingatha
Olga Mvican

Women Shoppers
Sindiswa Dlathe
Mabusi Gumed

Khanyo Maphumulo
Mmabatho Ramoupi
Sonto Khumalo

Nomhlanhla Sithole
Seipati Sothoane
Sindiwe Sokhela

Velle Mchunu
Brian "Jazz" Mazibuko
Thapi "Joko" Khambule

Gugu Mkhize
Lerato Wildeman
Nokuzola Dhlathu
Futhi Mhlongo

Rayhana Myles
Sibonakaliso Sothoane
Zanele Radebe
Alfred Ndlovu

Cyprian Shandu
John Lata
Mazwe Shabalala
Phakiso Motloung

Sduduzo Mthethwa
Thulani Mofokeng
Dipuo Lehlengwa
Vukani Dlamini
Khululwe Sithole

Gugwana Dlamini
Mabonga Khumalo
Nkosana Mzolo
Sduduzo Mhili
Skhumbuzo Kubheka

Sindane Mbatha
Siphamandla Ngcamu
Mfana "Jones" Hlope
Batho Mhlongo
Thulani Didi

Vincent Ngobese
Dancers

children and Crocodile is killed. Sabela is killed by the schoolchildren and a night of rioting follows. Sarafina is imprisoned and tortured. In prison, she learns of her teacher's death.

On release she visits her mother, recognising that her strength has enabled others to survive and struggle for freedom. Returning to the burnt-out school, Sarafina asks Guitar to accompany her in the song they would have sung together in the school play, and herself takes the Mandela role.

● *Sarafina!* is an adaptation of a musical by Mbongeni Ngema, a leading figure in South African protest theatre, who grew up in the townships around Durban, taking up the guitar before attaching himself to playwright Gibson Kente. The genesis of the film, according to the press notes, was in a decision by Ngema and Winnie Mandela to celebrate the schoolchildren's resistance to the 1976 State of Emergency, which lasted thirteen years.

The script clearly has its heart in the right place. It tells the story of young Sarafina's politicisation, which involves transferring her hero-worship of Mandela to her servant mother (the iconic African singer Miriam Makeba). In the final big number, "Freedom Is Coming Tomorrow", Sarafina dons a man's suit, effectively becoming Mandela. Following the killing of the policeman Sabela, she rejects violence and refuses to "hate the whites back". All that remains is for Whoopi Goldberg's enlightened teacher to point the way forward by asserting that the key question is not the attainment of freedom but what is to be done with freedom.

Location shooting lends an authenticity which jars with more artificial moments like the Broadway-style production numbers. The socially concerned and unrhetorical script is specifically aimed elsewhere, as the harrowing testimonies to camera from the imprisoned and tortured schoolgirls indicate. This realism also sits oddly with the film's more generic moments, which echo melodramas of resistance China, Soviet Russia and Hong Kong - the revelation concerning Guitar's crippled father, for instance, the recourse to the 'curling lip' school of villainy on the part of the police, and the central narrative and ideological role of the heroic teacher.

More successful is the sequence in which Sarafina, following her release from prison, visits her mother. Here the film provides a riposte to Sirk's *Imitation of Life*, in which a 'coloured' girl rejects her black servant mother. It also implicates white viewers in the struggle through its depiction of the 'normality' of the white employer's way of life. But successful polemical cinema requires a far tighter and more stringently ironic treatment than either Ngema or director Roodt manages to deliver. There is too much of 'The Kids From Fame Go Wild in Soweto' here, drowning out the indigenous South African music Ngema avowedly wishes to popularise.

Verina Glaessner

Schtonk!

Germany 1992

Director: Helmut Dietl

Certificate

15

Distributor

Artificial Eye

Production Company

Bavarian Film/WDR

Producers

Gunter Rohrbach

Helmut Dietl

Line Producer

Ulrich Limmer

Production Supervisor

Peter Sterr

Production Controller

Dieter Minx

Production Manager

Nikolaus Prediger

Unit Manager

Heinz Hausner

Casting

An Dörthe Braker

Screenplay

Helmut Dietl

Ulrich Limmer

Director of Photography

Xaver Schwarzenberger

In colour

Editor

Tanja Schmidbauer

Art Directors

Götz Weidner

Benedikt Herforth

Special Effects

Heinz Ludwig

Music

Konstantin Wecker

Costume Design

Bernd Stockinger

Barbara Ehret

Make-up

Heidi Moser-Neumayr

Peter Knöpfle

Sound Editor

Chris Price

Cast

Götz George

Hermann Willié

Uwe Ochsenknecht

Fritz Knobel

Christiane Hörbiger

Freya von Hepp

Rolf Hoppe

Karl Lentz

Dagmar Manzel

Biggi

Veronica Ferres

Martha

Rosemarie Fendel

Frau Lentz

Karl Schönböck

Professor Strasser

Harald Juhnke

Kummer

Ulrich Mühe

Dr Wieland

Martin Benrath

Uwe Esser

Hermann Laue

Kurt Glück

Georg Marischka

Von Klantz

Peter Roggisch

SS-Obersturmbann

führer

Andreas Lukoschik

Knopp

Thomas Holtzmann

Cornelius

Hark Bohm

Priest

Fritz Lichtenhahn

Wolfgang Menge

Experts

Willy Harlander

Customs Officer

9,992 feet

111 minutes

Subtitles

● As Berlin falls, and Hitler and Eva Braun's corpses are discovered in their bunker, soldiers are instructed to douse them in petrol and forget the past. Immediately, Third Reich relics become a valuable commodity, and nine-year-old Fritz Knobel becomes an experienced operator, selling the Führer's hat, with full documentation, to an American soldier. In the 1950s, during the German economic miracle, Fritz's business slumps, but he meets and marries the beautiful Biggi. Years later, Biggi is running a dry-cleaning business in Swabia while Fritz is a painter, faking Toulouse-Lautrecs.

A collector of Nazi memorabilia, Karl Lentz, is searching for a fabled nude portrait by Hitler of Eva Braun, but Biggi, insulted at the way Fritz pictured her in the Lautrecs, refuses to pose. Fritz finds a replacement model in the peasant girl Martha, and sells Lentz the 'Braun' portrait. References to an alleged attempt to fly Hitler's papers abroad at the end of the war lead Fritz to a new plan, the forging of Hitler's diaries. Lentz and his wife hold a gala reception on the anniversary of Hitler's birth, with the promise of a reading from a Hitler manuscript. Fritz provides Hitler's 'diary' for April 1945, in which the Führer 'dreams' the crash of the plane with his papers.

Fritz meets a Hamburg journalist, Hermann Willié, who has bought the

hulk of the Carin II, a yacht which once belonged to Field Marshal Göring, and attempted to sell it to his niece, Frau Freya von Hopp, for 350,000 marks. His paper refuses to pay 50,000 marks for photographs of Göring's niece on Göring's yacht. Now in league with Fritz, Willié drives to the alleged site of the plane crash and photographs the 'grave' of the pilot; this time, he does a deal for the pictures not with the editor of the paper but with a deputy, Dr Wieland. Production of the diaries gathers pace as Fritz provides material from his own experience; after newspapermen are moved by the "unbelievable humanity" of Hitler's banalities, Willié orders 25 more volumes. At a champagne reception, the Carin II is relaunched.

Independent experts are asked to assess the handwriting against another Hitler document, and Fritz duly fakes one, in which Hitler asks Dr Porsche to design the Volkswagen. An increasingly deranged Fritz has by now manufactured the ashes of Adolf and Eva, to the immense excitement of Willié, whose order for diaries has reached 60. A reception with fireworks display on the Carin II marks Willié's 30 years in journalism, but Freya subsequently leaves him. The diaries are launched at a hysterical press conference attended by journalists from 87 countries. But a new report proves the threads, paper and glue to be post-war. Fritz, Biggi and Martha escape abroad, while the disturbed Willié, convinced that Hitler must still be alive, sails off in search of him in the Carin II, pursued by the police.

● *Schtonk!* has been heavily promoted as an exposé of modern German society; and in a context of resurgent Nazism, a film analysing the enduring fascination with Nazi imagery and ideology, and perhaps shedding some light on its links with the current outbreaks of barbarism in some German cities, would be timely indeed. But *Schtonk!* is not that film. It relies not on analysis but rather on what could charitably be called broad humour, on a hysterical pace relentlessly maintained, and on a disas-

trously over-elaborated and increasingly repetitious plot. Its flailing at modern German society, in particular the press, the world of scholarship and the military, carries little conviction since all these figures are presented as caricatures of cupidity and credulousness, and none has any existence outside the plot. *Schtonk!* has a perfunctory sense of time and history.

Helmut Dietl does lard his narrative with some effective visual compositions, such as the endless snake of umbrellas queuing at Lentz's reception, or the final press conference shot like a Hitler rally, or a scene of Willié taking Hitler and Eva's ashes as snuff. The film's verbal humour is also occasionally inventive: Fritz plans to fake a book of Hitler's views on women, and even a Hitlerian opera to be staged at Bayreuth. But more typical are scenes of Willié falling over in the mud, or revealed to be wearing a corset, or an extended joke about Hitler's flatulence. The sum total of *Schtonk!*'s historical and psychological acumen is to have Fritz and Willié mugging their way into dementia while vulturine businessmen dream their marks-ist dreams.

There is some incidental pleasure in the contrast between Hamburg high technology and the cottage industry by which Fritz ages the diaries using kettles of tea and an iron. There is time, too, to ponder the unwitting sagacity of Dietl's statement that the word *Schtonk!*, used by Chaplin in *The Great Dictator* to indicate that he is very, very angry, is not in fact meaningless but derived from a Yiddish word denoting a terrible mess. The immense success in Germany of this fundamentally old-fashioned film is hardly surprising. By rigorously excluding the real world and ordinary people, by aiming its 'satire' at the clichéd targets of corrupt newspapermen, arrogant scholars and mad Nazi collectors, by avoiding any authentic danger, pain or horror, *Schtonk!* allows its audiences to enjoy a safe belly laugh, secure in the knowledge that the farcical events they are watching have nothing whatsoever to do with them.

Julian Graffy



Pooper scooper: Götz George

Singles

USA 1992

Director: Cameron Crowe

Certificate
12

Distributor
Warners

Production Company
Atkinson/
Knickerbocker
for Warner Bros

Executive Producer
Art Linson

Producer
Cameron Crowe
Richard Hashimoto

Co-producer
Richard Chew

Associate Producer
Kelly Curtis

Unit Production Manager
Richard Hashimoto

Location Manager
Patricia Fay

2nd Unit Director
Richard Chew

Casting
Marion Dougherty
Additional:
Owens Hill
Seattle:
Dixon/Walker Casting
Extras:
White Light Casting

Assistant Directors
Jerry Ziesmer
Michael-McCloud
Thompson
Joel Wang

Screenplay
Cameron Crowe

Director of Photography
Ueli Steiger

Colour
Technicolor

2nd Unit Director of Photography
Billy O'Drobinak

Aerial Director of Photography
Frank Holgate

Camera Operator
Billy O'Drobinak

Steadicam Operator
Paul Taylor

Editor
Richard Chew

Production Designer
Stephen Lineweaver

Art Director
Mark Haack

Set Design
Cosmas Demetriou

Set Decorator
Clay Griffith

Special Effects
Jim Reedy

Music
Paul Westerberg
Additional:
Chris Cornell
Richard Gibbs

Music Supervisor
Danny Bramson

Music Editor
Carlton Kaller
Christine Cholvin

Songs
"Dyslexic Heart",
"Waiting for
Somebody" by and
performed by Paul
Westerberg; "Birth
Ritual" by Chris
Cornell, Matthew
D. Cameron, Kim
A. Thayil, performed
by Soundgarden;
"Would?" by Jerry
Cantrell, "It Ain't Like
That" by Jerry Cantrell,
Mike Starr, Sean
Kinney, performed
by Alice in Chains;
"Breath" by Eddie
Vedder, Stone Gossard,
"State of Love and
Trust" by Eddie Vedder,
Mike McCready,
Jeff Ament, performed
by Pearl Jam; "Seasons"

by and performed by
Chris Cornell; "Drown"
by Billy Corgan,
performed by
Smashing Pumpkins;
"Overblown" by and
performed by
Mudhoney; "Battle of
Evermore" by Jimmy
Page, Robert Plant,
performed by The
Lovemongers; "Chloe
Dancer/Crown of
Thorns" by Andrew
Wood, Stone Gossard,
Jeff Ament, Gregory
Gilmore, Bruce
Fairweather,
performed by Mother
Love Bone; "May This
Be Love" by and
performed by Jimi
Hendrix; "Nearly Lost
You" by Van Conner,
Mark Lanegan, Lee
Conner, performed
by Screaming Trees;
"Touch Me I'm Dick
(Touch Me I'm Sick)" by
Mudhoney, performed
by Citizen Dick; "Three
Days" by Eric Avery,
Perry Farrell, David
Navarro, Stephen
Perkins, performed
by Jane's Addiction;
"Heart and Lungs"
by Robert Roth, Mark
Pickerel, Chris Quinn,
Hiro Yamamoto,
performed by
Truly; "Little Girl" by
McKinley Morganfield,
performed by Muddy
Waters; "Dig for Fire"
by Black Francis,
performed by The
Pixies; "Blue Train" by
and performed by John
Coltrane; "Radio Song"
by William Berry, Peter
Buck, Michael Stipe,
Mike Mills, performed
by REM; "Family
Affair" by Sylvester
Stewart, performed
by Sly and the Family
Stone; "Jinx" by and
performed by TAD;
"(What's So Funny
'Bout) Peace, Love
and Understanding"
by Nick Lowe; "My
Three Sons Theme" by
Frank DeVol; "Bastards
of Young" by Paul
Westerberg; "She Sells
Sanctuary" by Ian
Robert Astbury,
William Henry Duffy,
performed by The
Cult; "Hey Joe" by Billy
Roberts; "Bring the
Noise" by Carlton
Ridenhour, Hank
Shocklee, Eric Sadler;
"Any Gal From Texas"
by Ralph Blane, Robert
Wells, Josef Myrow

Costume Design
Jane Ruhm

Costumers
Supervisors:
Gail Bixby
Frances Vega-Buck
Dan Perrett

Make-up
Key:
Norman Leavitt

Opticals
Pacific Title
Cinema Research
Corporation

Supervising Sound Editor
Richard King

Sound Editors
Barbara Barnaby
Sukey Fontelieu



Mature, romantic and perceptive: Matt Dillon, Bridget Fonda

Michael Magill	Mary Robins	James Le Gros	Dana Eskelson	Cameron Crowe	Daniel Johnson
ADR Supervisor	Chris Ziesmer	Andy	Club Girl	Club Interviewer	Sean
Cliff Latimer	Gigi De Pourtales	Devon Raymond	Mykol Hazzen	Jeff Ament	Bruce Pavitt
ADR Editor	Julie Adams	Ruth	Club Bouncer	Jeff	Bruce
Cynthia Haagens	Wendy Skerritt	Camilo Gallardo	Art Cahn	Pat DiNizio	Michael Gardner
Supervising Foley Editor	John Anderson	Luiz	Magazine Stand Clerk	Sid	Mike
Pamela Bentkowski	Rob Price	Ally Walker	Michael Su	Chris Cornell	Sandra Grant
Foley Editors	Stunt Co-ordinator	Pam	Ted	Chris	Waitress
Christine Danelski	Greg Walker	Eric Stoltz	Jane Jones	Thomas A. Doyle	Karen Denice La Voie
Christopher Flick	Helicopter Pilot	Mime	Denise	Wrong Phone Number	Hostess
Sound Recordists	Craig Hosking	Jeremy Piven	Johnny "Sugarbear" Willis	Alice Marie Crowe	Tom Francis
Art Rochester		Doug Hughley	Rick	Dr Jamison's Nurse	Deputy Mayor
Music:	Cast	Tom Skerritt	Randy Thompson	Joan Giammarco	Jerry Ziesmer
Niko Bolas	Bridget Fonda	Mayor Weber	Stu	Receptionist	Councilman Jordan
Dolby stereo	Janet Livermore	Peter Horton	Paul Giamatti	Jim Hechim	Fisher
Sound Re-recordists	Campbell Scott	Bill Smillie	Kissing Man	Rich	Nina Escudero
Robert J. Litt	Steve Dunne	Boston Doctor	Alicia Roper	Heather Hughes	Airline Clerk
Greg P. Russell	Kyra Sedgwick	Chuck McQuary	Kissing Woman	Lauren	Dan Wartman
Michael Jiron	Linda Powell	Garage Opener Clerk	Xavier McDaniel	Tim Burton	Single Kid on Plane
Sound Effects Editors	Debbie Hunt	Christopher Kennedy	As Himself	Brian	Amy Hill
Jay Dranch	Jim True	Masterson	Wayne Cody	"Crazy Steve" Olsen	Hospital Nurse
Ed Callahan	David Bailey	Steve, aged 10	As Himself	Rob	Mike Parker
David Kulczycki	Matt Dillon	Matt Magnano	Eddie Vedder	Bernard Bentley	Mover
Production Assistants	Cliff Poncier	Jaffar Smith	Eddie	Spiro	
Suzanne Ziesmer	Bill Pullman	Kids	Stone Gossard	Stephen Rutledge	
Bill Wrubel	Dr Jamison		Stone	Charles	
Tasha Le Mel					

● Twentysomething environmentalist Linda owns a house in the suburbs of Seattle. On the rebound from a heartbreaking fling with a foreign student who wasn't everything he appeared to be, she cold-shoulders Steve's overtures when they meet at a rock club, but relents when their paths cross later the same evening. They are a sympathetic couple, with similar tastes and ideas. Steve is a traffic planner, whose pet project is the 'Super Train', a visionary scheme to get Seattle's commuters out of their cars and onto rail transportation. He lives in a two-storey block of single apartment units, where his neighbours include an ex-lover, Janet; she is currently besotted with the tenant below her, Cliff, an aspiring rock star with his grunge band Citizen Dick. Across the courtyard is Debbie, single and desperate enough to apply to a video-dating company. They all congregate in the coffee shop where Janet and Cliff work (he is also an artist and a delivery man for a flower company), and Steve is inundated with conflicting advice about how to handle this new, special relationship. His pal Bailey prevails on him to wait a few days after their date before calling Linda, who takes offence. Meanwhile Debbie's dreamy video-date is stolen by her roommate, and Janet decides she needs breast implants to regain the attention of Cliff, who takes her for granted and has an eye for groupies. Reassured by an admiring surgeon, Dr Jamison, she pulls back from the brink and breaks up with Cliff.

Linda and Steve's romance survives the shock of her pregnancy. Steve proposed and she accepts, but after losing the baby in a car accident, Linda decides to take part in a month-long environmental research project off the Alaska coast. When she returns, they resolve to be 'just friends'. Steve leaves a drunken declaration of love on Linda's answer phone, but the tape is mangled and she never hears it. On top of this the Super Train plan is rejected by the mayor and Steve is out of a job. Cliff realises how much he needs Janet and proves himself a new man in his gallant efforts to win her back. Debbie finds her perfect mate purely by chance, while Linda and Steve get back together.

● For his second movie as a director, Cameron Crowe has gone back to a script he began in 1983, the logical follow-up to his screenplay *Fast Times at Ridgemont High* (for which, famously, the 21-year-old *Rolling Stone* reporter enrolled in high school incognito) and its little-regarded sequel *The Wild Life* (directed by Crowe's producer, Art Linson). In fact *Singles* might be *The Wild Life* made over – they both concern newly independent young adults in a singles apartment complex. However, any comparison between the two movies could only underline the overwhelming superiority of the new film, which is mature, romantic and perceptive where its predecessor was callow, puerile and blinkered.

Like *Fast Times*, *Singles* is an ensemble piece and an entree into a specific subculture. The emotional tribulations of half-a-dozen young people (five really: much of Jim True's role appears to have been lost in the editing) are usefully seen against the bohemian milieu of downtown Seattle. Crowe brings to bear the thorough research and objective scrutiny of a good investigative reporter, and more especially, the informed ear of an experienced rock critic: the thriving Seattle sound figures prominently, as you might expect, represented live by grunge bands like Alice In Chains and Soundgarden, while the soundtrack is enriched with apposite selections from REM, The Pixies and even John Coltrane. Music plays more than a background role in this film: it brings people together, defines who they are. Cliff, the lead singer of Citizen Dick, with his anthem 'Touch Me, I'm Dick', Steve is fondly remembered by his old classmates as the only disc jockey who could mix Elvis Costello and Public Enemy, and the first thing Linda does on seeing his apartment is check out the record collection for compatability (Hendrix, The Clash, Tom Jones). Crowe's twentysomethings see identity as a question of style choices, and they are at age when the options are still relatively open. A life partner is the ultimate matching accessory. Linda introduces herself via her house – the first she can call her own – and the most precious token she can give a lover is the remote control for her garage door. Debbie refashions her image via a video dating agency (Tim Burton appears briefly as the director of her video, a pastiche of *Psycho* and *Superman*). Janet considers having breast implants but ends up suggesting a new hairstyle for her doctor.

These character are unformed, yuppies without upward mobility, but Crowe and his personable cast make their vulnerability vivid and engaging. Subjective techniques like monologue to camera and dramatised recollections provide for some of the film's sharpest insights into both sides of the brinksman'ship central to the dating scene. Crowe is not a showy director, but his film has a relaxed, rambling structure and the hip, ironic tone to complement Seattle's boho atmosphere (vide 'chapters' with headings like 'Have Fun – Stay Single' and 'Blues For A T-Shirt', and the *au fait* casting of *LA Law*'s Sheila Kelley and *thirtysomething*'s Peter Horton as a video agency dream date). It is only when he feels compelled to inject a dramatic crisis that Crowe falls back on melodramatic cliché: Linda loses her baby in a car accident; Steve's declaration of love falls foul of a malfunctioning answerphone. If Crowe sees himself as the "realist-slash-dreamer" Steve is described as, his romanticism is of a more predictable kind than his keen social observation; the real pleasure of *Singles* is neatly encapsulated in its last ironic exchange: "Does everybody go through this?" "No, I think just us...".

Tom Charity

Traces of Red

USA 1992

Director: Andy Wolk

Certificate

15

Distributor

Entertainment

Production Company

Samuel Goldwyn

Company

Executive Producer

David V. Picker

Producer

Mark Gordon

Production Associate

Patrick Lynn

Production Co-ordinator

Elayne Keratsis

Unit Production Manager

Tom Luse

Location Manager

Mary Morgan

Post-production

Supervisor

Ron Payne

Casting

Ellen Jacoby

Assistant Directors

David Sardi

Melanie Grefe-Feder

Screenplay

Jim Piddock

Director of Photography

Tim Suhrstedt

In colour

Additional Photography

Don Burgess

2nd Unit Camera

Operator/Steadicam

Operator

Mark V. Van Loon

Editor

Trudy Ship

Production Designers

Dan Bishop

Dianna Freas

Art Director

Richard Fojo

Set Decorator

Nancy Sivitz

Set Dressers

Peter K. Benson

Bill Von Ohlen

Kevin J. Long

On-set:

Daniel Fisher

Lead Scenic Artist

Michael Brown

Special Effects

Co-ordinator

J. B. Jones

Special Effects Foreman

Marc Banich

Music

Graeme Revell

Additional Music

Arrangements

Megan Cavallari

Philip Tallman

Music Editor

Dick Bernstein

Costume Design

Hilary Rosenfeld

Costume Supervisor

Lynette Bernay

Set Costumer

Kathryn Bird

Make-up Artists

Sheila Walker

Additional:

Diane Maurno

Lorraine Bracco:

Angelo Dibiasi

Title Design

Dan Perri

Supervising Sound Editors

Christopher Sheldon

Dane A. Davis

Sound Editors

Martin J. Bram

Maciek Malish

ADR Group Co-ordinator

Burton Sharp

Foley Editors

Tom Hammond

Nicholas Forshager

Sound Recordists

Steve C. Aaron

Sound Re-recordists

Stanley Kastner

John Boyd

Sound Effects Editors

Kini Kay

Todd Toon

Foley Artists

Ossama Khuluki

Catherine Harper

Production Assistants

Tom Barone

Sheila R. Myers

Nicholas D'Alleva

Kelly Erin Welton

Alison Troy

Jodi Shapera

John Guss

Stunt Co-ordinator

Artie Malesci

Cast

James Belushi

Jack Dobson

Lorraine Bracco

Ellen Schofield

Tony Goldwyn

Steve Frayn

William Russ

Michael Dobson

Faye Grant

Beth Frayn

Michelle Joyner

Morgan Cassidy

Joe Lisi

Lieutenant J. C. Hooks

Victoria Bass

Susan Dobson

Melanie Tomlin

Amanda

Jim Piddock

Mr Martyn

Ed Amatrudo

Emilio

Daniel Tucker Kamin

Prosecutor Dan Ayaroff

Harriet Grinnell

Louis Dobson

Lindsey Jayde Sapp

Nancy Frayn

Mario Ernesto Sanchez

Tony Garidi

Joseph C. Hess

Minnesota

Will Knickerbocker

Tommy Hawkins

Edgar Allen Poe IV

Ian Wicks

Julian Byrd

Squeeze Club

Bartender

Billy Garrigues

Phillip Norris

Lori Creevey

Ellen's Receptionist

Michael George Owens

Key West Priest

Tom Amick

Wurtz's Friend

Rex Benson

Hotel Manager

John T. Howe

Funeral Priest

Gerald Beebe

Angry Diner

Robert Farrell

Detective

Artie Malesci

Stevie B's Patron

Junior Biggs

Snakepit Bartender

Kathryn Culliver Pierce

Kimberly Davis

Gregory L. Richter

Honor Guard Leader

Renate Schlesinger

Ingrid

9,409 feet

105 minutes

● Palm Beach. Police detective Jack Dobson meets his brother Michael, a candidate for state senator, for dinner, along with Jack's partner Steve Frayn and his wife Beth, and Ellen Schofield, a rich widow with whom Jack is involved. After dinner Jack picks up Morgan Cassidy, a waitress at the restaurant, and takes her to his apartment where they make love.

While investigating the killing of a hooker, Kimberly Davis, Jack receives anonymous verses, sealed with a lipstick kiss, which relate to the murder. Morgan is found killed, her mouth smeared with lipstick similar to that on the letters – a brand, Jack discovers, used both by Ellen and by Beth Frayn. A further anonymous verse mentions Gloria Wurtz who, Jack tells Steve, was his first-grade teacher who sexually abused him and was jailed for it.

When Steve flies to Key West in search of Gloria's son (who proves to be dead), Ellen comes to his hotel and seduces him. Jack, finding out, stages a jealous scene on Steve's return. Suspecting Steve's infidelity, Beth is further alarmed when the clothes of both Kimberly and Morgan turn up in her house. Jack takes Beth to his country cabin for safety. Steve drives to Ellen's house, where he finds her murdered; a trail leads him to Michael Dobson, who tells him Gloria Wurtz was innocent: Jack's true molester was their mother.

At Jack's apartment Steve and Michael discover incriminating evidence. Steve speeds to Jack's cabin and shoots him as he seems about to attack Beth. Michael arranges for Jack to receive a hero's funeral. Michael visits Amanda, a member of his campaign staff whom Jack once dated. As he starts to strangle her, Steve bursts in, followed by Jack, who staged his own death when he realised his brother was framing him. Michael grabs Jack's gun and shoots himself dead.

● "Nothing's what it seems here", Jack's voice-over tells us at the outset of the film, as his corpse is loaded into an ambulance and we're eased into a long flashback. The warning is timely, since this shameless nod to *Sunset Boulevard* is just the first of a series of audience-misdirection devices culminating in a faked funeral. Along the way, the circle of suspicion widens steadily and virtually all the major characters take turns at acting ominous, just to keep us wondering.

Which would be absolutely fine, were it done with any subtlety or style. Instead, *Traces of Red* is lumbered with a slapdash plot and a script of clumping heavy-handedness, with acting to match. As the hero, James Belushi conveys frustration by punching several inoffensive walls, while Lorraine Bracco breathes and undulates in a display of high-octane vampery that might have embarrassed Theda Bara. Despite which, the bedroom scenes are dismally tepid. *Traces of Red* bills itself as "an erotic thriller", but only the most undemanding viewer could find much to thrill in this stumbling effort.

Philip Kemp

VIDEO

Mark Kermode reviews this month's rental/rental premiere releases and William Green new retail/retail premiere videos

★ Highlights

Reviews in *Monthly Film Bulletin* (MFB) and *Sight and Sound* are cited in parentheses

Rental

Blue Ice

Guild 8683

USA 1992

Certificate 15 Director Russell Mulcahy Tacky, incoherent and unconvincing revival of Michael Caine's Harry Palmer character, now thinly disguised as Harry Anders. The ex-secret service agent is lured out of retirement by Sean Young. Big bangs ensue. (S&S December 1992)

The Cutting Edge

MGM/UA PEV 52315

USA 1992

Certificate PG Director Paul Michael Glaser ★ Terrific fleet-footed, tongue-in-cheek comedy snappily directed by Glaser. Former ice hockey jock teams up with a snooty figure skating champion to win an Olympic Gold. (S&S July 1992)

Far and Away

CIC VHA 1597

USA 1992

Certificate 15 Director Ron Howard Slushy but enjoyable melodrama about two Irish runaways (Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman) discovering a new life in America. Cruise's accent is dismal, but Howard's direction is overwhelming. (S&S August 1992)

Gladiator

Columbia Tristar CVT 13644

USA 1992

Certificate 15 Director Rowdy Herrington ★ The best boxing movie of the year, Herrington's rumbustious bash-em-up is 98 minutes of hard-hitting action and square-jawed stand-offs. A poor white kid (James Marshall) fights for his father's life in a tough neighbourhood. (S&S July 1992, wrongly entitled *The Gladiator*)

The Inner Circle

Columbia Tristar CVT 13646

Italy 1991

Certificate 15 Director Andrei Konchalovsky Incorporating footage shot within



Boxing clever: 'Gladiator'

the walls of the Kremlin and KGB headquarters, Konchalovsky's authentic tale of the horrors of life under Stalin is peculiarly Westernised: US and British actors speak in cod Russian accents and the USSR is portrayed as hell on earth. (S&S June 1992)

Johnny Suede

Artificial Eye ART 903

USA/Switzerland/France 1991

Certificate 15 Director Tom DiCillo

★ DiCillo's feature debut is a low-key joy, a witty examination of modern love seen through the eyes of a dreamer obsessed with the 50s. Brad Pitt is great in the lead, balancing self-conscious cool with dorkiness. (S&S July 1992)

My Cousin Vinny

FoxVideo 1876

USA 1992

Certificate 15 Director Jonathan Lynn Joe Pesci is in fine comic form as a New York lawyer out of his depth defending his cousin against a murder charge in Alabama. Lively support from Marisa Tomei and Fred Gwynne. (S&S July 1992)

The Rapture

20.20 NVT 11620

USA 1991

Certificate 18 Director Michael Tolkin ★ An audacious attempt to discredit fundamentalist Christianity by portraying literally the events which 'rapturists' believe will end the world.



Breaking the ice: D.B. Sweeney and Moira Kelly in 'The Cutting Edge'

Tolkin's script is witty and intelligent, Mimi Rogers and David Duchovny are seductive leads, and the depiction of Armageddon as a bad John Boorman movie is spot on. (S&S July 1992)

Scorchers

CBS Fox 2950

USA 1991

Certificate 18 Director David Beaird Dreary erotic adventure set in America's Deep South where three women (Faye Dunaway, Meg Tilly and Emily Lloyd) wrestle with their sexual passions and anxieties. (S&S May 1992)

Straight Talk

Buena Vista B914492

USA 1992

Certificate PG Director Barnet Kellman

★ Although the premise is unpromising (a small-town girl bluffs her way into a job as a radio doctor) this is actually a thigh-slapping comedy replete with snappy one-liners. James Woods injects a salutary grimy note. (S&S July 1992)

Turtle Beach

20.20 NVT 12966

Australia 1992

Certificate 15 Director Stephen Wallace Dull right-on fare which purports to deal with racial tension in Kuala Lumpur. Greta Scacchi is wooden as ace Australian reporter Judith Wilkes who exposes the treatment of Vietnamese boat people. (S&S July 1992)

Voyager

Curzon Video CV 0011

Germany/France 1991

Certificate 15 Director Volker Schlöndorff A languorous, atmospheric trapeze through a world of collapsing technology played out via a classic Greek tragedy narrative. A wandering soul (Sam Shepard) is attracted to a young free-spirit who reminds him of his lost wife. (NB This version, identical to the theatrical release, runs at 108 minutes [25 fps] not 100 minutes [24 fps] as printed in S&S February 1992)

Rental premiere

American Me

CIC VHA 1576

USA 1992

Certificate 18 Director Edward James Olmos

Producers Sean Daniel, Robert M. Young, Edward James Olmos Screenplay Floyd Mutrux, Desmond Nakano Lead Actors Edward James Olmos, William Forsythe, Pepe Serna, Evelina Fernandez 121 minutes

★ Easily rental premiere of the month. A grim but unexploitative depiction of gang warfare in LA, prison life and the inability of ex-cons to adapt on the outside. Hispanic anti-hero Santana (Olmos) is arrested as a child and indoctrinated with the Folsom Prison blues. Low-key direction, solid performances and an intelligent script.

Chrome Soldiers

CIC VHB 2681

USA 1992

Certificate 15 Director Thomas J. Wright Producer Derek Kavanagh Screenplay Nick Randall, story by Ross LaManna,

John McCormick *Lead Actors* Gary Busey, Ray Sharkey, William Atherton, Norman Skaggs 88 minutes

A Vietnam veteran (Busey) teams up with a gang of bikers to investigate and avenge the death of his brother in his small-town home. This is sanitised fare, lacking thrills, action, or narrative surprises.

Child of Rage

Odyssey ODY328

USA 1992

Certificate 15 Director Larry Peerce
Producer David Shepard *Teleplay*
Phil Penningroth, Suzette Pouture
Lead Actors Mel Harris, Dwight Schultz,
Mariette Hartley, Ashley Peldon
94 minutes

★ An accomplished and uncompromising true-life TV drama, by turns gut-wrenching, horrifying and tear-jerking. Seven-year-old Peldon turns in a magnificent performance as a homicidal child, eager to slaughter her parents and assault her brother in return for abuse suffered at the hands of her father.

Class Act

Warner PEV 12530

USA 1992

Certificate 15 Director Randall Miller
Producers Todd Black, Maynell Thomas
Screenplay John Semper, Cynthia Friedlob
Lead Actors Christopher Reid, Christopher
Martin, Rhea Perlman, Meshach Taylor
94 minutes

High school antics with rap soundtrack. Two chalk-and-cheese pupils have their school records switched, sparking a comedy of mistaken identities.

Cool As Ice

CIC VHA 1546

USA 1991

Certificate PG Director David Kellog
Producers Carolyn Pfeiffer, Lionel Wigram
Screenplay David Stenn *Lead Actors*
Vanilla Ice, Kristin Minter, Michael Gross,
Candy Clark 89 minutes

Pop video-style musical featuring the limited talents of white-boy rapper Vanilla Ice. Hard livin' biker Johnny tempts square Kathy with his dreadful clothes and dreary music.

Doctor Mordrid

CIC VHB 2697

USA 1992

Certificate 15 Directors Albert Band, Charles Band Producers Keith Payson, Charles Band Screenplay C. Courtney Joyner *Lead Actors* Jeffrey Combs, Yvette Nipar, Jay Acovone, Brian Thompson 89 minutes
Sub-Corman nonsense from trash maestro Band. Clash between two ancient wizards representing the forces of good and evil.

Duplicates

CIC VHB 2653

USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Sandor Stern
Producer Robert M. Rolsky Screenplay
Sandor Stern, Andrew Neiderman
Lead Actors Gregory Harrison, Kim Greist,
Lane Smith, Cicely Tyson 90 minutes
Lively but unoriginal sci-fi cheapie boosted by straight-faced performances from a sporadically talented cast. Two parents searching for their missing son stumble upon the fiendish Sandberg Institute, where human replicants are programmed with new memories.



Family plot: Joe Pesci defends his cousin Vinny

Father and Son

Columbia Tristar CVT 116889

USA 1992

Certificate 18 Director Georg Stanford Brown Executive Producers Peter Locke, Donald Kushner Screenplay Walter Halsey Davis *Lead Actors* Lou Gossett Jnr, Blair Underwood, Rae Dawn Chong, Tony Plana 90 minutes

A tough jailbird (Gossett, typically hard-nosed) is reunited with the son he abandoned when he ends up in the same prison. Emotional traumas and violent confrontations ensue. Hard-hitting cable-TV fodder.

The Fear Inside

Medusa MC 385

USA 1992

Certificate 15 Director Leon Ichaso Producer John Broderick Screenplay David Birke *Lead Actors* Christine Lahti, Dylan McDermott, Jennifer Rubin 90 minutes
★ A superior psychological chiller, low on physical violence but high on atmospheric tension and satisfying surprises. An agoraphobic woman (Lahti) invites terror into her home in the shape of two childishly twisted killers. Rubin is convincingly cracked as the immature anti-heroine and even McDermott is less wooden than usual.

The Heart of the Lie

Odyssey ODY 333

USA 1992

Certificate 15 Director/Producer Jerry London Screenplay Larry Barber, Paul Barber *Lead Actors* Timothy Busfield, Lindsay Frost, John Karlen, John Pleshette, Linda Blair 84 minutes
Dull true-life TV drama depicting the trial of one-time pin-up turned cop Bambi Bembeneck, accused of murdering her husband's ex-wife. Linda Blair fails to inject any pizzazz into the proceedings.

Honour Thy Mother

CIC VHA 1607

USA 1992

Certificate 15 Director David Greene
Producer Harvey Frand Screenplay Richard

Delong Adams, Robert L. Freedman
Lead Actors Sharon Gless, William McNamara, Brian Wimmer 90 minutes
True-life TV drama about an attack on Bonnie Von Stein's home in which her husband was killed, and for which her son was a prime suspect. Unremarkable.

Innocent Young Female

20.20 NVT 19420

USA 1992

Certificate 18 Director Bobby Houston Producers Terry Kahn, Ed Elbert, Gregory Vanger Screenplay Bobby Houston, Lisa Sutton *Lead Actors* Deborah May, David Keith, Ray Sharkey, Loretta Devine 99 minutes

A young man poses as a prison governor to rescue his fiancée from prison. Sets out to be standard 'women behind bars' sleaze but mutates midway into an engagingly ridiculous thriller.

Invasion of Privacy

Hi-Fliers HFV 8222

USA 1992

Certificate 18 Director Kevin Meyer
Producer Ashok Amritraj Screenplay Kevin



Way out: 'The Arsenal Stadium Mystery'

Meyer *Lead Actors* Robby Benson, Jennifer O'Neill, Lydie Denier, Ian Ogilvy 92 minutes

Formulaic 'psycho-in-our-midst' thriller, ploddingly written but entertainingly executed. Power-dressed humanist journalist Hillary Wayne (O'Neill) adopts a violent ex-con with an obsessive streak. Benson is great fun as the finger-stabbing, anally-retentive loony.

Project Shadowchaser

First Independent VA 20176

USA 1992

Certificate 15 Director John Eyres Producers Geoff Griffiths, John Eyres Screenplay Stephen Lister *Lead Actors* Martin Kove, Meg Foster, Frank Zagarino 94 minutes
Sprightly sci-fi/action-adventure hybrid, shamelessly ripped-off from *Die Hard*, *Terminator* and (surprisingly) *Sleeper*. FBI agents mistakenly 'thaw out' a frozen football hero to fight an android which has taken over a high-rise hospital.

Pirates

Columbia Tristar CVT 18585

USA 1991

Certificate 18 Director Noah Stern Producer Johnathan Furie Screenplay Noah Stern *Lead Actors* Kevin Bacon, Kyra Sedgwick, Bruce Martin Payne, Kristin Dattilo 92 minutes

Unfunny sex comedy about two young lovers whose steamy exploits cause the spontaneous combustion of objects around them. Straight-to-camera monologues and other pseudo-arty narrative disruption techniques add to the general irritation.

Romper Stomper

Medusa MO 388

Australia 1992

Certificate 18 Director Geoffrey Wright Producers Daniel Scharf, Ian Pringle Screenplay Geoffrey Wright *Lead Actors* Russell Crowe, Daniel Pollock, Jacqueline McKenzie, Alex Scott 90 minutes

★ A powerful, ambitious and flawed depiction of skinhead life in Australia which eschews moralising commentary. Crowe and Pollock's performances are flawless and the script is grittily realistic, but the absence of any perspective other than that of the violent skinheads is worrying. Thought-provoking.

Samantha

First Independent VA 20177

USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Stephen La Rocque Producer Donald P. Borchers Screenplay John Golden, Stephen La Rocque *Lead Actors* Martha Plimpton, Dermot Mulroney, Hector Elizondo, Mary Kay Place, Ione Skye 97 minutes
A feisty young woman (Plimpton) is shocked to discover that she is adopted and heads off in search of her real parents in this oddball romantic comedy.

Retail

The Arsenal Stadium Mystery

Connoisseur CR 099

UK 1939 Price £12.99

Certificate PG Director Thorold Dickinson

★ Amused and amusing, the exquisite Leslie Banks solves a murder mystery at

Highbury (dribbling through a whole football team of suspects) while rehearsing the Scotland Yard Christmas pantomime. Highly recommended. B/W (MFB No. 71)

The Ballad of the Sad Café

Mayfair Video CV 0010

USA 1990 Price £15.99

Certificate 15 Director Simon Callow
Callow's debut feature, adapted from Carson McCullers' novella, is a lurid piece of Deep South gothic, notable for a bloody fistfight between Keith Carradine and Vanessa Redgrave. (MFB No. 687)

Boys Will Be Boys

Connoisseur CR 100

UK 1935 Price £12.99

Certificate U Director William Beaudine
★ Classic Gainsborough comedy, the first of music-hall star Will Hay's many anarchic assaults on the dignity of the teaching profession. When downwardly mobile Narkover School gets Hay as their new headmaster chaos naturally ensues. B/W (MFB No. 19)

Evergreen

Connoisseur CR 097

UK 1934 Price £12.99

Certificate U Director Victor Saville
★ Director Saville and showgirl star Jessie Matthews have never received enough credit for their glamorous musical comedies made for the Gaumont-British studios in the 30s. The backstager *Evergreen* borrows from America with its mass choreography and Rodgers and Hart songs. B/W (MFB No. 4)

Une Femme est une femme

Electric EP 0019

France 1961 Price £15.99

Certificate PG Director Jean-Luc Godard
★ A nightclub stripper forsakes boyfriend Jean-Claude Brialy for his friend Jean-Paul Belmondo. One of cinema's great love letters, with Godard's camera obsessively focusing on Anna Karina's face. Subtitles Widescreen (MFB No. 400)

First a Girl

Connoisseur CR 098

UK 1935 Price £12.99

Certificate U Director Victor Saville
★ *First a Girl* adapts the German musical *Viktor und Viktoria* (later reworked by Blake Edwards as *Victor/Victoria*) but the sexual guilelessness and Jessie Matthews' chirpy style are authentically English. B/W (MFB No. 22)



Jessie Mathews sparkles in 'Evergreen'



French with tears: Anna Karina and Jean-Claude Brialy in 'Une Femme est une femme'

The Icicle Thief (Ladri di saponette)

Tartan Video TVT 030S (Laser Disc TVL 030)

Italy 1989 Price £15.99 (Laser Disc £29.99)

Certificate PG Director Maurizio Nichetti

★ Poking cruel fun at society's consumption of images, Nichetti plays with the idea of a film-within-a-film. An excellent farce. Subtitles (MFB No. 682)

Lola

Electric EP 0020

France 1960 Price £15.99

Certificate PG Director Jacques Demy

★ Although lacking music for dancing and colour for costumes, Demy's first film (set in Nantes) still comes over with confidence. Cabaret girl Anouk Aimée is wooed by several men, but it's the father of her child who is her true love.

B/W Subtitles Widescreen (MFB No. 337)

Marked for Death

Fox Video 1865

USA 1990 Price £10.99

Certificate 18 Director Dwight H. Little
Routinely brutal martial arts vigilante thriller, a vehicle for grim-faced action man Steven Seagal. With Joanna Pacula and Keith David. (S&S June 1991)

Pete Kelly's Blues

Tartan Video BVD 11736

(Laser Disc TVL 019)

USA 1955 Price £13.99 (Laser Disc £29.99)

Certificate PG Director Jack Webb

★ A personal project for jazz fan and *Dragnet* star Webb. The mannered

atmosphere suits the soundtrack perfectly. With a wonderful speakeasy jazz background and an extraordinary cast – Peggy Lee, Lee Marvin, Edmond O'Brien, Janet Leigh and Ella Fitzgerald. Widescreen (MFB No. 262)

Pierrot le fou

Electric EP 0018

France 1965 Price £15.99

Certificate 15 Director Jean-Luc Godard

★ Climactic film of the maverick director's first and most creative period. A writer (Jean-Paul Belmondo) embarks on a doomed runaway romance with a woman (Anna Karina) – an old story shot through with extravagant colour symbolism and personal anguish. Subtitles Widescreen (MFB No. 679)

A Strange Place to Meet

(Drôle d'endroit pour une rencontre)

Artificial Eye ART 050

France 1988 Price £15.99

Certificate 15 Director François Dupeyron

★ A Gallic Brief Encounter with Gérard Depardieu and Catherine Deneuve as two unhappy souls stranded together in the friendless confines of a motorway service station. Their acting makes up for the lack of locomotion. Subtitles (MFB No. 669)

Volere, Volere

Tartan Video TVT 029S

(Laser Disc TVL 029)

Italy 1991 Price £15.99 (Laser Disc £29.99)

Certificate 15

Directors Maurizio Nichetti, Guido Manuli

★ Nichetti's follow-up to the delightful

Icicle Thief (see above) is a lightweight romantic comedy about a shy young man whose courtship is frustrated when he finds himself turning into a cartoon. Subtitles (S&S May 1992)

Retail collection

The Charlie Chaplin Collection

Fox Video 3004/3005/3009/3010

Price £10.99 each

The Gold Rush/Pay Day

USA 1925 (re-edited 1942)/1922

Certificate U

★ Chaplin's most durable silent comedy, with prospector Charlie half-starved in a frozen hut with hungry Mack Swain and reduced to eating his bootlaces. In *Pay Day* Chaplin plays a labourer spending his Friday night on the town.

B/W Silent (MFB No. 272)

The Circus/A Day's Pleasure

USA 1919/1927

Certificate U

★ Awarded a special Oscar at the first Academy Award ceremony, *The Circus* puts every possible big top prop to ingenious use, making the maudlin love interest just about bearable. In *A Day's Pleasure*, Charlie takes Edna Purviance and the kids out for a ride in the family's unreliable Model-T Ford.

B/W Silent (No MFB reference)

Monsieur Verdoux

USA 1947

Certificate PG

★ A personal catastrophe for Chaplin, since this film lost him the affection of the public, *Monsieur Verdoux* has subsequently been critically reinstated as his blackest and most subtle comedy. His Verdoux is a charming French ladykiller who does away with rich, elderly conquests. B/W (MFB No. 167)

Limelight

USA 1951

Certificate U

A sentimental tale of an ageing music-hall entertainer, this was the director's final American film before his exile and decline in Switzerland. An emotional personal testimony and a last bow (of sorts) to his old screen persona. With Claire Bloom and Buster Keaton. B/W (MFB No. 226)

Retail premiere

Urotsukidoji: Legend of the Overfiend

Manga Video MANV 1008

Japan 1989 Price £12.99

Certificate 18 Director Hideko Takayama

Producers Yasuhito Yamaki, Yoshinobu Nishikazi Screenplay Noboru Aikawa, Toshio Maeda, John O'Donnell, Laurence Guinness 108 minutes

Formula heroics, facile science fiction futurism, slaverling monsters and tediously repetitive violence – the animated fantasies of the Manga school have everything to satisfy the adolescent mind. This one spices up the menu with some startlingly graphic cartoon porn. English version.

Letters are welcome, and should be addressed to the Editor at Sight and Sound, British Film Institute, 21 Stephen Street, London W1P 1PL. Facsimile 071 436 2327

A question of context

From Guy Barefoot

The interesting discussions of *Dracula* in the January issue included the observations by Kim Newman that the different film versions of Bram Stoker's novel have come at times of "major economic and social upheavals", and that "Dracula evidently appeals to nations in crisis". Can he therefore identify the intervening years of stability during which *Dracula* did not appeal?

He locates the different films during: the "chaos of Weimar" – but then German history following (and preceding) the Weimar Republic was not exactly short on upheaval; the Great Depression – normally taken to have lasted throughout the 30s, a period followed by the upheaval of wartime; Britain's post-Suez "loss of imperial clout" – though Britain's loss of Empire has been a fairly protracted experience; and during the crisis and recession accompanying the replacements of Presidents Carter and Bush – but American Presidents get elected every four years, so to choose a year within a year of an election covers quite a lot of territory (just as the observation that the Spanish *El Conde Dracula* came at the "historical turning point" of four years before Franco's death seems ingenious to say the least).

His statement about *Dracula* appealing to nations in crisis makes one wonder why there aren't more *Dracula* movies coming out of Russia at the moment. The quick answer to that question is that *Dracula* is a western myth about the (near) east. More generally, Newman's own emphasis on the diversity of *Dracula* films suggests a more complex relationship between the story and the society; if the 1930 version appealed because of the Depression, what was the appeal of the 1927 stage version it was based on; if the 1958 version is to be related to imperial decline, how does that relate to the publication of Stoker's novel in 1897, the year of the imperial celebration of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee?

Apart from noting the way in which myths shift over time, social context might be accompanied here by some attention to the context provided by the film industry. Put simply, if Britain produced a lot of *Dracula* movies in the 60s and none in the 80s it does not mean that there was upheaval under Wilson and peace and harmony under Thatcher; on the other hand Britain did have a film industry in the 60s and only the bare bones of one in the 80s.

London NW4

Spot the replicant

From Steven O'Donoghue

With regard to Philip Strick's article on the new cut of *Blade Runner* (S&S December), I would like to add to the debate of whether Deckard is a replicant or a human.

Just before the final game of hide-and-seek between Deckard and Roy Batty, the replicant addresses him by name, even though the two have not met before in the film. How does Batty know it is him, even though he catches only a momentary glimpse as he evades Deckard's gun? Either Deckard's reputation as a blade runner is known throughout the colonies, hence

making his face known among the replicant population, or the pair have met before. This latter premise may fit with the 'missing replicant' theory outlined in Strick's article, whereby Deckard was part of the original replicant team. If his memories were altered after his capture, he would be the perfect hunter for the other replicants. A case of: set a replicant to catch a replicant. Doubt could also be cast over Rachael's alleged identity, especially as her childhood memories of a spider, which lived outside her bedroom window, are clearly echoed in the Voight-Kampff test administered by Deckard. There is endless room for speculation.

London E2

Black and white in colour

From Veronica Hitchcock

On Christmas morning, BBC2 showed its first, albeit quasi, colourised film. Jacques Tati's 1947 black and white *Jour de fête* had been touched up here and there with spot colours. At the fairground some of the horses' harnesses were coloured, the tri-colour was tinted in red, white and blue, but worst of all, additional coloured streamers were superimposed over the picture, so that when the camera moved, the streamers in red, white and blue remained static, creating an odd appearance. Throughout the film ludicrous spot colour was used.

Jour de fête has been shown on numerous occasions in its original black and white form, so I am unable to believe that an uncoloured print does not exist. Furthermore, *Radio Times* ran a billing that stated in minuscule type that the film was "B/w and colour", so someone must have made a conscious decision to play this version.

No black and white films are now ever shown in peak BBC1 viewing time, though I feel sure the BBC would dearly love to be able to show colourised films. When Michael Grade was still Managing Director of BBC television, I remember him saying apropos colourisation that he might welcome it, but that where the work of living directors was concerned, care and tact would need to be exercised. Hang on in there, Fred Zinnemann.

London SW1

Negative images

From Lydia Popowich

As a disabled film student I was dismayed to read Kim Newman's review of *The Waterdance* (S&S December). The offensive and demeaning language used in this account, for example, "cripple" and "chairbound", clearly shows Kim Newman's prejudice and ignorance about disability. The general tone of the review is from an 'ableist' viewpoint, presenting disability as a tragic problem to be resolved on an individual level and not a problem of society and its attitudes.

Such a discriminatory attitude reflects the film industry's general failure to portray disabled people and their varied lives realistically. Obsessed with the body beautiful and narrow definitions of sexuality, films persist in circulating negative images which reinforce the fear and ignorance of the non-disabled. Disability is often exploited as a metaphor in films such as *Awakenings* and *Bitter Moon*, or reduced to simple stereotypes, as for example in *Dr Strangelove*. Disability is an ordinary fact of life for many people with experiences as



Negative images of disability: Eric Stoltz in 'The Waterdance'

boring, exciting, happy or sad as any non-disabled persons. Disabled people are not pathetic freaks constantly battling with problems and 'coming to terms' with dreadful conditions. Many of us have fun in life and, believe it or not, even fulfilling sexual relationships, contrary to Kim Newman's expectations.

The Waterdance is yet another disability movie falling into the familiar trap of defining disability as a medical not a social problem. The film is set in a rehabilitation centre and the characters are shown as having an essentially bleak future, either dependant and suicidal in an institution or alone, abandoned by families, with the occasional outing to a strip club for sexual gratification which cannot be obtained in ordinary relationships. Even the most positive character, Garcia, renounces his chance of happiness by giving up his lover to an able-bodied husband; choosing platonic friendship instead of sexual love. As in *Coming Home* and *Born on the Fourth of July*, the nature of masculinity is really the issue here. Is an erect penis really the defining characteristic of true manhood?

Sex and disability is not the huge problem Kim Newman and *The Waterdance* assume. The huge problem is social prejudice and a culture dominated by negative and inaccurate images of disability, aided and abetted by your magazine.

Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Top twenty

From Amy Taubin

As the go-between for Aki Kaurismäki's top ten (S&S December), I feel responsible for seeing that it gets into print as he wanted it (and not as your editors saw fit to amend it). Had I not led Kaurismäki to believe, as I believed, that it would be possible to bend the idiotic rule of ten films, I doubt that he would have participated.

Tokyo Story, *Casque d'or*, *Touch of Evil* and *The Trial*, *Cyrano de Bergerac* (Michael Gordon), *La ilusión viaja en tranvía* (Buñuel), *Bande à part* and the others by Godard, *White Reindeer* (Erik Blomberg), *The Night of the Hunter*, *Mouchette*, *High Sierra* plus everything by Chaplin, Harold Lloyd, the Marx Brothers, Laurel & Hardy, Keaton and W. C. Fields.

Parallel list: *A Matter of Life and Death*, *L'Atalante*, *A Woman Under the Influence*, *Gertrud*, *Nanook of the North*, *Otis at Monterey* (this is a 20-minute documentary by D. A. Pennebaker which was mysteriously transformed by your editors into *Monterey Pop*), *The Human Beast*, *Mr. Moto*, "Nicholas Lang's *Rancho Guitar*", *Shock Corridor*, *Ikiru*, the work of Vasily Shukshin, especially *The Red Snowball Tree*.

New York, US

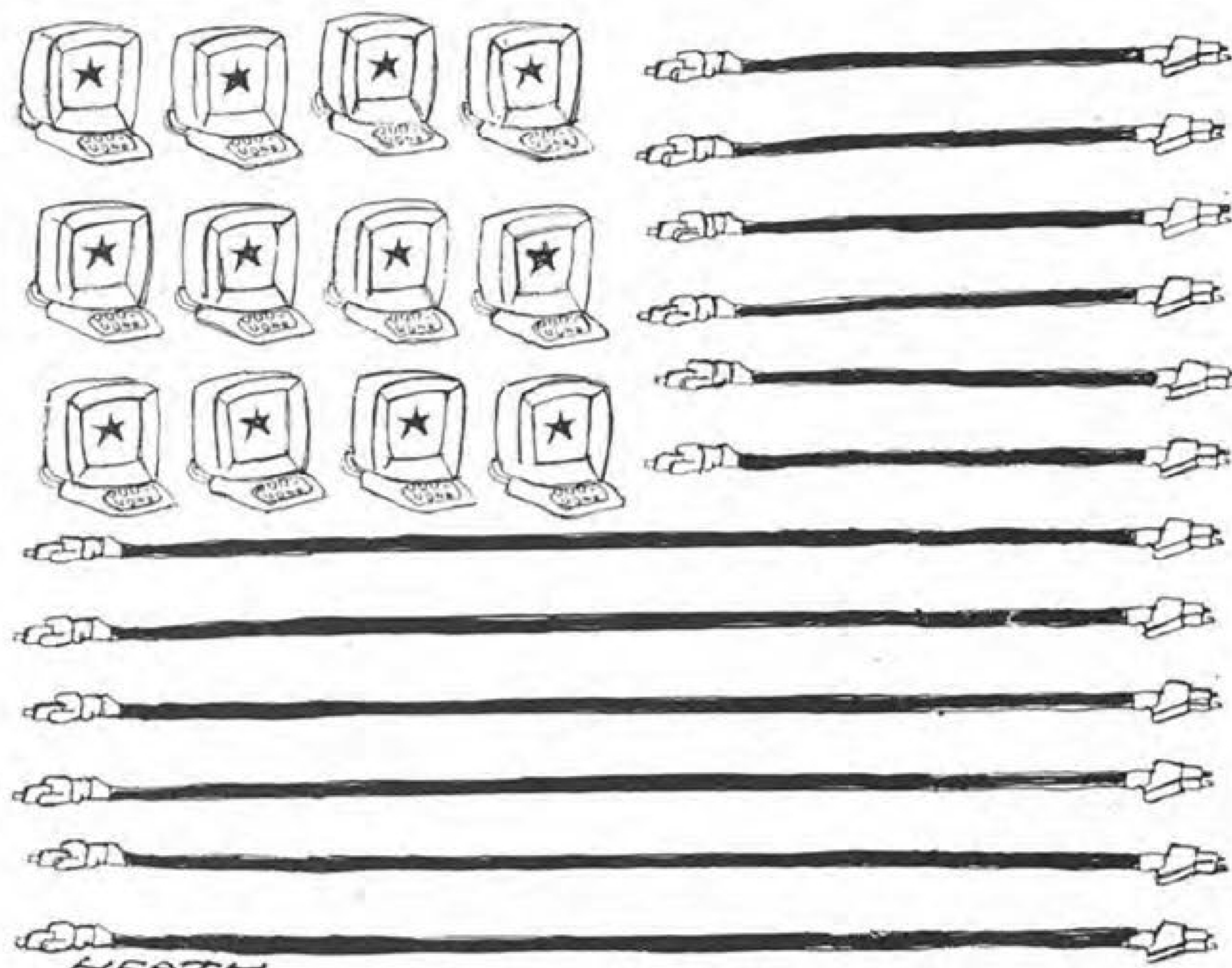
Corrections

April 1992 p.61: *Tacones Lejanos* (*High Heels*): The song credit for "Un Año de amor" should read: based on "C'est irrécupérable" and "Un anno d'amore" by N. Ferrer, G. Verlor, performed by Luz Casal.

November 1992 p.5: The producers of *Russia: The Missing Years* are Castle Communications, not Carlton Communications as stated.

January 1993 p.22: In the Harvey Keitel interview, "Amos Poe" should read "Abel Ferrara"; p.51: In the *Reservoir Dogs* photo caption, the figure credited as Lawrence Tierney is in fact Steve Buscemi.

Bill 'n' Al's modern adventure



Benjamin Woolley

Both Bill Clinton and Al Gore demand to be known by the diminutive forms of their first names. Presumably they hope this will add to their popular appeal. It never worked for poor young Danforth. But perhaps it will work for Bill 'n' Al, two regular guys.

Me 'n' Al go back a long way. He opened the 1989 Siggraph computer graphics convention with a pre-recorded, but nonetheless very personal video address to me and the 30,000 or so other delegates. "Information", he portentously announced, "is exploding by leaps and bounds". It's a phrase that sticks in the mind, like a bad lyric. Empty it may be, but it shows that Al believes in information.

And so, it emerges, does Bill. When he held his post-election agenda-setting conference, he made sure information was up there among the keynotes. The conference, held at Little Rock, was designed to give Clinton a few ideas for his administration. Participants from all walks of life and of all political shades were invited, and were given five minutes to voice their views. Conspicuously omitted from the guestlist was the Hollywood establishment. People such as Michael Eisner, head of Walt Disney, were passed over in favour of people such as John

Cooke, head of the Disney Channel, one of Eisner's employees.

The reason for excluding Hollywood's studio bosses was not a new mood of Democratic egalitarianism, but Bill 'n' Al's interest in information and, specifically, in the 'new media'. Never mind about what the corporate crusties think, what do the kids want? What's new?

The answers to these questions were to be supplied by the moguls of new media, not just the heads of channels like Disney and MTV, but the bosses of the high-technology companies like John Sculley of Apple and Robert Allen of AT&T. These people are the visionaries of the new information age, when television, video, computers, hi-fi, games consoles, cable television, malls, theme parks and telephone networks will unite to create a new metamedium, the sort of medium that will give a political leader intimate interactive contact with his people, the sort of medium that will redevelop the wasteland that is contemporary American television into a lush new media meadow of limitless possibilities.

The media meadow is a concept rich with powerful political symbolism. It could become Clinton's vision thing. During the campaign, he promised the American people little more than economic competence.

'The reason for excluding Hollywood's studio bosses was not a new mood of Democratic egalitarianism, but Bill 'n' Al's interest in information and, specifically, in the new media'

He could find no real ideology, no grand unified theory. Technology and media could provide him with just what he is looking for, adding some character to an otherwise potentially colourless administration. They are one of the country's few remaining areas of international pre-eminence, its telecommunications and computer industries being among the most powerful in their respective sectors, and its software suppliers – both computer software companies like Microsoft and media software companies like the Hollywood studios – unsurpassed in their domination of world markets. If Clinton's administration can bring these industries together, perhaps it has the makings of a post-industrial strategy that will give the Japanese and Germans something to think about.

So far, only one proposal for this strategy has emerged. It is Al Gore's enthusiasm for building what have been dubbed "information freeways". These will be the high-capacity, broadband fibre-optic network connections linking together the nation's computers, from personal to super. His hope is that they will one day provide an information-age equivalent to the railroads and highways, that in their respective ages introduced a technological unity to what remains a potentially fractured nation.

What exactly these information freeways will carry, how they will be controlled and according to which technical standards they will be interconnected, remains largely unspecified. Also, some industry figures are deeply sceptical about the government, rather than the market, imposing such an infrastructure. But it is a seductive notion, replete with ready-made metaphors that invoke America's dreamy past, its pioneering days and the post-war years.

The end of the Space Age can be identified as 28 January 1986, the date of the Challenger disaster. At that moment, technology seemed to lose the powerful political symbolism it once offered, a loss compounded by Dan Quayle's appointment as head of the space programme (an appointment that led to his most endearing gaffe, beginning an address with the words 'Fellow astronauts...'). Now, Bill 'n' Al may be about to rediscover that symbolism. In linking technology with the glamorous worlds of television and the movies, they may have found a new political message – and the message is the media.

PROFESSOR POTESKIN'S COMPETITION

The correct answers to our Christmas quiz, 'What The Dickens', ran as follows: 1. João Botelho; 2. Pip (Philip Pirrip); 3. 'Oliver!'; 4. Diana Dors; 5. Mister Quilp; 6. Arthur Hopcraft; 7. 'Nobody's Fault'; 8. 'Scrooged'; 9. Edna May Oliver; 10. Alec Guinness. Grand winners Angus Tarn of Carshalton and John Filer of Louth were among the few entrants to spell everyone properly and supply the appropriate exclamation mark on Question 3. Lesley Campy, Pete Cockhill, Roy Eaglestone, Norman Pate, James Hamilton, Juan Lamela,

R. M. Bermudez, M. Humphries, Keverne Weston and Christine Perry were the runners-up. For this month's quiz, 'The God Squad', we have three video box sets of Pedro Almodóvar's 'Matador' to be won. 'Matador' is released by Tartan Video on 22 February (video £15.99/laser disc £29.95). Answers by 15 February, please, to Professor Poteskin, Sight and Sound, 21 Stephen Street, London W1P 1PL.

1. Which Italian director made films about The Apostles, St Joan, St Francis and

St Augustine?

2. Who was nominated for an Oscar after playing the Mother Abbess in 'The Sound of Music'?

3. Which inquisitive cleric was played by Alec Guinness in the cinema, and later by Kenneth More on television?

4. By what name does Jean Simmons' lady evangelist go in 'Elmer Gantry'?

5. Father Flanagan (30s) and Father O'Malley (40s) were two popular screen priests. Which Hollywood stars played them?

6. Nuns go crazy in a Himalayan convent. In which film?

7. What is the ecclesiastical connection between Rex Harrison, Robbie Coltrane and Tom Conti?

8. In which recent adaptation of a Bernanos novel does Gérard Depardieu play a poor country priest?

9. To what church do the defendants of 'A Cry in the Dark' belong?

10. Name any film in which Joan Collins has played a nun.

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